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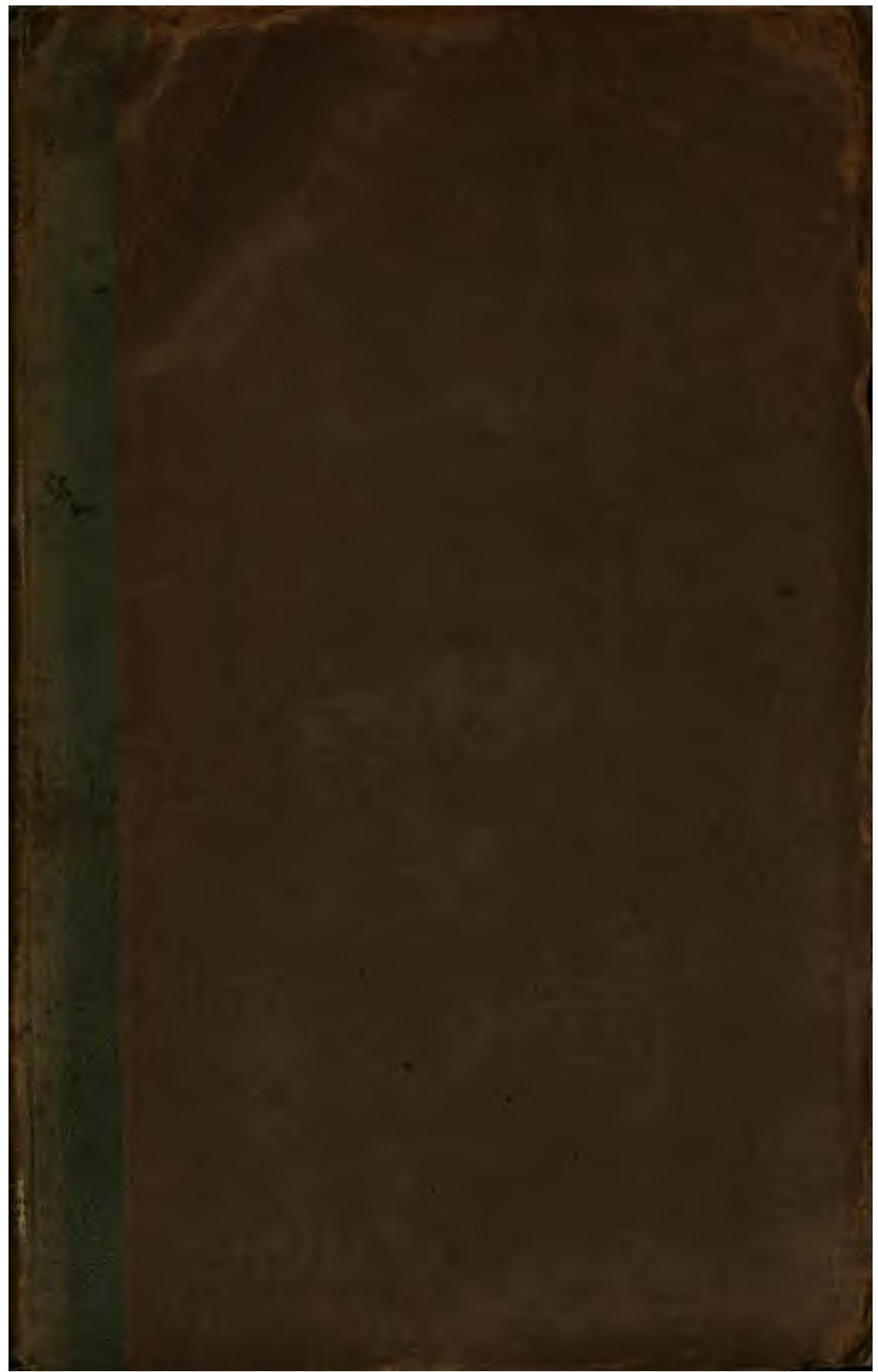
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THE BRIDE OF MESSINA.

A Tragedy

FROM THE GERMAN OF

F. v. SCHILLER.

BY

GEORGE IRVINE, ESQ.

LONDON:

JOHN MACRONE, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

MDCCCXXXVII.

G. WOODFALL, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.

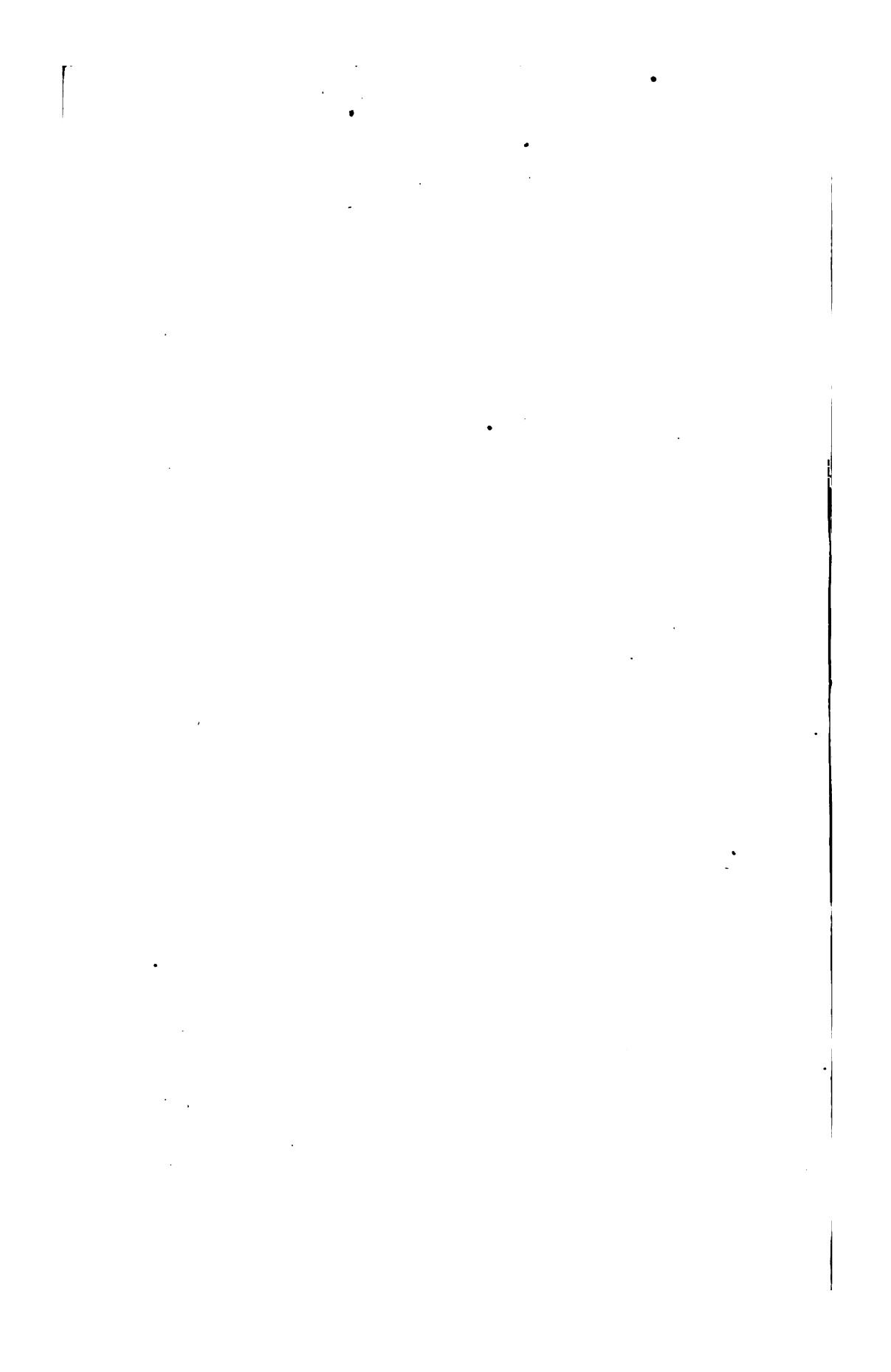


TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
EARL STANHOPE,
ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR LORD STANHOPE,

I VENTURE to dedicate this Work to you, because while I know that, owing to your intimate acquaintance with all the refinements of the German language, no one is more able than yourself to appreciate the difficulty of the undertaking, I am equally assured, from the kindness and liberality of your disposition, that no one will be more lenient to the faults with which I am conscious it abounds. Lastly, and not least, I am instigated by my wish to evince to you the feelings with which

I am,
MY DEAR LORD STANHOPE,
Your Lordship's
Sincere friend and obliged Servant,
G. IRVINE.



PREFACE.

I AM told, and I believe with truth, that no one now reads poetry : perhaps my Translation of this acknowledged masterpiece of one of the most celebrated German Authors, may so little deserve that appellation, as to be exempted from the general proscription. Under whatever designation it may be received, I submit it with deep humility to the public. It is some excuse to myself, that to the best of my very moderate ability, I have rendered that homage to the literature of Germany which that great nation has paid to our own. With the fearless liberality with which the consciousness of their own worth naturally inspires them, the Germans have translated and adopted in their theatres, almost all the most approved Dramatic writings of our own country; and, though I am fully aware that, if this attempt at reciprocity should find favour in their sight, it will be owing only to the generous indulgence with which they will accept the will for the deed, it will be a source of much real pleasure to me to evince my respect, and admiration of their

intellectual and moral excellences. With regard to the introduction of the Chorus, and the general management of the subject, I refer those who are curious on these points to the learned criticism of the author, in his own preface, which will amply repay the trouble of perusal. One peculiarity will immediately strike all readers; for the explanation of which I subjoin Schiller's own words, without weakening them by any observations of my own.

"Another liberty which I have allowed myself, may perhaps be more difficult to excuse. I have blended the Christian religion with the Greek Mythology, and have alluded even to the Moorish superstitions. But the scene of action is Messina, where these three religions either actually existed, or exerted their influence by monumental memorials, and appealed to the senses. And I think that poetry has a right to consider different religious opinions as forming a collective mass for the imagination to work on, in which every thing that bears a peculiar character, and expresses a peculiar mode of feeling, finds its proper place. All religions are founded in common, on the belief of a Divinity, and the Poet must be permitted to express this in the manner he finds most convenient, and most applicable to the occasion."



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DONNA ISABELLA, Princess of Messina.

DON MANUEL, } her Sons.
DON CESAR, }

BEATRICE, her Daughter.

DIEGO, an ancient Servant.

MESSENGERS.

CHORUS, consisting of the Attendants of the Brothers.

The ELDERS OF MESSINA, who are mute.

A

THE
BRIDE OF MESSINA.

The scene represents a spacious hall, supported on pillars, with entrances on both sides. A wide folding door in the bottom of the stage leads to a chapel.

DONNA ISABELLA

(In deep mourning, surrounded by the Elders of Messina).

CONSTRAINED by bitter need, not by my wish
I come, ye hoary elders of our state,
Forth from my female sanctuary's still
And peace-embosom'd chambers; and once more
Before the eyes of men unveil this brow.
For it beseems the widow who hath lost

Her lord, the light and glory of her being,
Her sable-shrouded form from the bold ken
Of the prying world, in silent cells to hide.
Yet with resistless might, inexorable,
The important moment's voice of power compels me
To seek that world's long unaccustom'd blaze.

Twice hath not yet the moon her orb of light
Renew'd in beauty, since my princely consort
Unto his last long resting-place I bore ;
Who strong in domination ruled this state,
And buckler'd you with mighty arm against
A hostile world, which leaguer'd you around.

Himself is gone for ever ; but his spirit
Still lives immortal in a glorious pair
Of hero sons, the pride of our dear country.
Here in the midst of you, in joyous strength,
Ye saw them grow to manhood ; but together
Grew, from some unknown and mysterious seed,
Unholy hate, and jealous feud between them,
Rending gay childhood's natural bond, and blown
To fearful ripeness with advancing years.
Ne'er did their union bless this anxious bosom ;
Yet did this bosom nourish both alike.
'Twixt both my love and care I did divide,

And both, I know, with filial duty, love me.
In this one only feeling are they one;
Strife, e'en to death, divides them in all else.

True, while their awe-inspiring father reign'd,
With the well-balanced curb of even justice,
He knew to check their hot and heady will.
And 'neath the iron burthen of one yoke,
Bent and compell'd their stubborn moods together.
Arm'd, durst they not approach each other, nor
Pass 'neath one roof night's peace-devoted hours.
Thus far, indeed, with might's imperious pressure,
He stemm'd th' eruption of their open wrath,
But unabated in their depth of heart
He left their hate.—Strength cares not to suppress
The rising spring, because it feels the power
At will to dam the river's fiercest stream.

What could not but come, came: soon as his eyes
Were closed in death, and that his heavy hand
Relax'd its grasp, the grudge of old burst forth,
Enkindled like the glow of fire repressed
Into the sudden might of open flame.
I tell but what ye all were witness to.
The state was split in twain; the brothers' feud
Burst all the sacred bands of kindly nature,

And slipp'd the couples of promiscuous strife.
Swords clash'd, this city was their battle plain,
Yea, e'en these hallowed walls were stain'd with blood.
Ye saw the state was rent—but rent far deeper
Was every tortured fibre of this heart.
Ye felt alone the public suffering,
And thought but little of a mother's grief.
Ye came to me, and harshly thus ye spake.—
“ Thou seest the mutual hatred of thy sons
“ Works up the vexed state to civil discord,
“ Which by a neighbourhood of foes girt round,
“ By union only can resist their power,
“ Thou art their mother! Well,—so look to it
“ That thou appease the fierce hate of thy children.
“ To us, the peaceful, what are the wild broils
“ Of those who rule us? Must we rush to ruin
“ Because thy mad sons wage domestic war?
“ We will take counsel for ourselves without them,
“ And yield ourselves unto another lord,
“ Who, with the will, hath power to work our good.”
Thus did ye speak, ye hard unpitying men.
Ye heeded but your city and yourselves,
And cast the burthen of the public woe
On this worn heart, which, with a mother's anguish

And heavy care, was crush'd enough already.
I undertook that which I dared not hope.
With my torn mother's heart, distractedly,
I rush'd between the foes, and cried out " Peace ! "
With busy indefatigable prayer
I plied them undismayedly ; until
A parent's scalding tears obtain'd from both
That they would be content in this our city
Messina, under their paternal roof,
To view each other with an eye of charity,
Which yet ne'er was since their great father died.

This is the day ! and hourly I await
My messenger who marshals their approach.

Prepare yourselves then to receive your lords
With lowly reverence, as becomes the subject.
Be it your only care to do your duty ;
That which concerns the rest ourself will look to.
Destructive to this land, and to themselves
Cause of deep ruin, was my sons' fell strife.
Appeased, united, they have might sufficient
To shelter you against a world in arms—
Ay, and assert their rights against yourselves.

(*The elders retire in silence, their hands clasped
on their breasts. ISABELLA signs to a servant
who remained behind.*)

ISABELLA. DIEGO.

ISABELLA.

Diego!

DIEGO.

What commands my gracious mistress?

ISABELLA.

Trust-worthy servant! honest heart! come nearer!

My suffering and my pain thou hast partaken,

Now then partake a joyful mother's joy.

To the true keeping of thy breast I trusted

My most sweet sorrow, and most hallow'd secret.

The moment is at hand when to the light

Of glorious day it shall be full revealed.

Too long, too long already I've repress'd

Nature's impetuous working, while superior

Another's will did lord it o'er my own.

Fearless and free, now lift I up her voice!

Yea! this blest day all my soul asks shall be

Accomplish'd, and these long-deserted halls

Embrace each object dearest to my love.

So turn thou then thy age-encumber'd step

Hence to the well-known cloister's sacred roof

Which shields the darling treasure of my heart.

'Twas thou, pure soul of truth, who bore it hence

To refuge there till better days, performing

Sad sorrow's office for the sorrowful.
Bring now with joy to these delighted arms
The holy pledge again! (*Horns sound in the distance.*)

Oh! hasten, hasten!

Let pleasure renovate thy step to youth.
I hear the warlike echo of the horns,
Whose sounds announce to me my sons' approach.

(*Exit DIEGO. Music is heard from both sides of the stage at a distance, gradually becoming louder as it approaches.*)

ISABELLA.

On foot is all Messina! Hark! a stream
Of confused voices rolls thick rustling hither!
'Tis they! their mother's heart responsive beating
Owns the magnetic influence of their presence.
'Tis they, 'tis they!—my children Oh, my children!

(*She rushes out.*)

ENTER CHORUS.

(*Consisting of two semichoruses, which, entering at the same moment from opposite sides, go round the stage, each ranging itself at last on the side by which it entered. One semichorus is composed of young and the other of elder knights, distinguished by the colours and decorations of their dresses. On their arriving*

*opposite to each other, the music of the march ceases,
and the two leaders of the semichoruses speak *.)*

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Fair hall of dominion
 I greet thee in duty!
 Proud cradle, where slumber'd
 Lords of thousands unnumber'd,
 Soaring so princely on columns of beauty!
 In the still scabbard
 Plunge the blade deep!
 Chain'd at the threshold
 Let the serpent-hair'd spectre of discord sleep!
 Falsehood and treason
 Stand trembling aloof!
 For the deep oath, the child of the Furies,
 Dread power, the strongest hell's far centre buries
 Shields hospitality's hallow'd roof!

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

In my burning heart is fury's storm!
 And my mailed hand is clenched for fight.

* The first semichorus consists of Cajetan, Bengar, Manfred, Tristan, and eight knights belonging to the suite of Don Manuel. The second of Bohemund, Ruggiero, Hippolyte, and nine knights of the suite of Don Cesar.

Like Medusa's adder'd head, the form
Of my hated foe glares full on my sight!
Scarce stem I the stream of my maddening blood!
Say, shall I greet him in peace or not?
Or shall I loose the boiling flood?
But the dread Goddess bids me cease,
Whose holy presence guards this spot,
And the Heaven consecrated peace!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Self possession, calm and sage,
Is the mild attribute of age!
In prudence, first I bid thee welcome here.

(TO THE SECOND CHORUS.)

Welcome be thou, and all hail
Who 'mid desolation's wail
This awful moment feels't like me
With a brother's sympathy:
And the tutelary nod
Of this Dome's protector God
Regard'st with fear!
While our chiefs from the tumult of battle cease,
Be it ours the gentle words of peace

In harmless intercourse to deal :
For gentle words can discord heal.
But if we meet 'neath Heav'n's free air,
Again our battle shall thunder there,
And our fury be proved by the bloody steel !

THE WHOLE CHORUS.

But if we meet 'neath Heaven's free air,
Again our battle shall thunder there,
And our fury be proved by the bloody steel.

FIRST CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

I hate thee not ; thou art not my foe !
One country bore us long ago ;
To the stranger we're bound by lawless might—
But slaves when their lords raise their battle cry,
Must do their brethren to death, or die ;
Such is their sovereign will, and such they call the right.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Little boots it to relate
The primal cause of that deep hate
Which gnaws their hearts !—it touches not me.
But in their quarrel we draw the sword,

Nor mounts there a knight in our chivalry
But guards the honor of his lord.

WHOLE CHORUS.

But in their quarrel we draw the sword,
Nor mounts there a knight in our chivalry
But guards the honor of his lord.

FIRST CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

Hark, what to myself I ponder'd,
Hither listless as I wander'd
'Mid the alleys of corn that waved so high—
Lost in my thoughts, and musingly.

In our wild fury's maddening mood
We scoff'd at reason's soothing powers,
For our senses were drown'd in boiling blood—
Are not these blooming harvests ours ?
These elms round which the vines are spun
Are they not children of our sun ?
Why should we not in mild delight
Lead on our calm days free from strife,
And win our smooth way through the paths of life ?
Why do these hands in murderous fight
For the far stranger wield the brand ?
He hath no right in this our land.

Upon his ocean bark he came
From where the sun goes down in fires :
We hail'd him with a guest's fair name,
In long past years, when lived our sires ;
And now in slav'ry's deep disgrace
We bow before the stranger race.

A SECOND OF THE CHORUS.—(MANFRED.)

To us a land of joy is given !
The fair sun, circling round his heaven,
Beams on it his immortal smile :
And joyously the hours had flown,
Were it hid from earth and ours alone.
The traitor wave that girds this isle
Wafts the bold corsairs, who ceaseless urge
Their desperate prows through the coast's wild
surge.
The very blessings we hold so dear
Serve but to lure the stranger here ;
Slaves are we in our own sweet home !
The land averts not its children's doom !
Not where golden Ceres laughs by the fair fountain,
Nor where Pan guards the peaceful hearth ;

Where iron gleams in the mine of the mountain,
Is the birth-place of the lords of earth.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Heaven baffles, in capricious mirth,
The generations of the dust !
But Nature is wise, and her law is just !
She gave us Plenty's cup to fill,
Its fruit eternally renewing ;
To them she gave the stubborn will,
And strength resistless, all subduing.
No check, no stay, that strength has found,
The wanton wish of their heart no bound.
Earth echoes to their victory call !
But the higher the mountain's pinnacle
The darker th' abyss, the fiercer the fall !
Be it mine in lowly sort to dwell,
Shelter'd by my helplessness !
The storm-stream comes tumbling in wild excess,
Form'd by the chill hail unceasingly gushing,
By the conflux of tempests impetuously rushing,
Bellowing in fury, the riven rocks crushing :

Rending the dams and the bridges asunder,
With the blackness of midnight and roar of the
thunder ;
Nor can aught keep the wrath of its dark spirit
under.

But its birth was a moment's work alone :

Already its track is no longer seen ;
In the sand its channel is dried and gone,
And the ruin alone saith " This hath been ! "
The bands of the spoiler pass by in vain,
They come and they depart—we bow, but we re-
main.

(*The door behind opens. DONNA ISABELLA appears standing between her sons, DON MANUEL and DON CESAR.*)

BOTH CHORUSES.

Hail, orient sun !
Whose dazzling glories stream
Round thy majestic head,
Lowly, we bend before thy opening beam !

FIRST CHORUS.

Fair is the moonlight
Beyond every other,

Though stars glitter round it :
But fairer the mother
Who, awful in beauty,
Shines mid her sons in the blaze of their might ;
The wide world affords not
An object so lovely, a picture so bright.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

From her deep bosom she sees arise
The aspiring shoot that threats the skies,
Blooming with flowers immortally the same !
For she hath borne a godlike race,
Shall roll like the sun through eternal space,
And give the circling age their glories and their name.

ROGERO.

The voice of the mighty is heard no more :
Stilly and hush'd is the noise of the nations.
Oblivion settles darkly down,
Brooding in night o'er the lost generations.
But far o'er that night,
Keenly glancing in light,
Rise the towering heads to which monarchs gave
birth ;

The Aurora of fame,
With eternity's flame,
Gilds these proud summits of the subject earth.

ISABELLA

(*Advancing with her sons*).

Look down, sweet Queen of yon high heaven, and press
Thy moderating hand on this swell'n heart,
Lest exultation heave it into pride.
The mother's joy forgets itself, who sees
Herself reflected in her sons' dear eyes.
Now, first, since I did give them to this light,
Do I embrace my plenitude of bliss :
For, till this day, I was compelled to part
The overflowing of my heart between them.
One child stern fate obliged me to forget,
While I enjoy'd the presence of the other.
Oh ! a warm mother's love is only one,
And my divided sons were ever twain.
Say, dare I trust the sweet intoxication
Of joy which lulls this anxious heart to rest ?

(*To Don Manuel.*)

When thus in love I press thy brother's hand,
Do I not plant a thorn in Manuel's bosom ?

(*To Don Cesar.*)

When thus I feed my eyes on that loved face
Is it not robbing thee? Oh! yet I tremble,
Lest that the very love I testify
Stir into fiercer blaze the flames of hatred.

(*After looking earnestly at both,*)

What may I hope? Speak, with what dispositions
Towards me and towards each other came ye here?
Is it still the old unexpiated hate
That ye bring with you to your father's house?
And doth stern war lie waiting you without
Crouch'd at the gates, and leash'd but for the moment,
Growl in his brazen muzzle; that so soon
As ye shall quit this presence, he may slip
His couples, and rush forth refresh'd to slaughter?

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Battle or peace? the dark lots rest
Veiled in the future's breast!
Yet, ere we part, shall fortune decide them:
Reckless are we, and arm'd to abide them.

ISABELLA.

(*looking round on the whole circle of her sons' attendants.*)
What means this open front of ruthless war?

What do these murderers here? Will ye then join
Your battle in the halls which gave you birth?
Wherefore this host of strangers, when a mother
Would pour forth all her heart unto her children?
Think ye that cold deceit and writhing cunning
Lie coil'd, like nested adders, in this heart,
That thus ye fence your backs with armed spies?
Oh! this vile band of slaves who dog your steps;
Your vengeance' sudden ministers—they are
No friends unto you. Oh! believe it not
That ever they would counsel you to good.
How can they, from their hearts, mean really kindness
To strangers, to a race imposed by force,
Who have expell'd them from their heritage,
And arrogate imperial sway above them?

Each man who lives would live but for himself,
Free, with no limitation but his will:
Necessity alone endures a master.
By force, indeed, and fear, ye may exact
That service which were willingly denied.
Oh! learn to know these slaves, these false at heart,
Who, by promoting mischief, do revenge
Themselves on your superiority.
Their lords' decline, the fall of lofty heads,

Is theme of all their songs, their common prattle—
The heirloom gossip left from son to son,
Wherewith they do curtail the winter's night.

Oh! my lov'd children! hostile is the world,
And falsely-minded: each one there but feels for
Himself alone—uncertain, weak, and changeful
Are all the ties which most capricious fortune
Hath form'd;—what humour knits, humour will loose.
Nature alone is honest; she alone
Clings fast to her eternal anchorage,
When all things else, upon the storm-vex'd waves
Of life drive headlong: it is inclination
That gives the friend—advantage the associate.
Ah! well is he, to whom birth gives a brother!
That fortune cannot give: with him his friend
Is concreate—and, though girt round with treason,
Singly, with twofold force, he braves the world.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

How vast her ken, whose mental eye
Can through the heart's dark secrets roll:
And, mid its wild obliquity,
Calmly and deeply read the soul!

While we are driven, in reckless strife,
Senseless and blind o'er the waste of life !

ISABELLA

(*To Don Cesar*).

Thou, who hast drawn thy sword upon thy brother,
Survey the host which circles thee around—
Where dost thou find a nobler form than his ?

(*To Don Manuel*).

Which one of those, whom thou misnamest thy friends,
May with thy brother claim comparison ?
Each is the fairest pattern of his age,
And each, in different excellence, is best.
Dare but to look each other in the face,
Oh ! most mad jealousy, most causeless envy !
Him from the midst of thousands had'st thou chosen
To be thine own ; him clasp'd unto thy heart
With love's warm pressure as thine only friend.
And yet, because mysterious nature gave him,
Like a most precious birth-gift in thy cradle—
To thy own blood a renegade, thou spurn'st him
With stubborn contradiction from thy foot,

To cast thyself away on these bad men,
And knit thee to the stranger and the foe.

DON MANUEL.

Hear me, my mother!

DON CESAR.

Dearest mother, hear me !

ISABELLA.

Ah ! not by words is this lamented strife
Appeasable ; my welfare and your own
Forbids the falsely expiating creed
That we may separate revenge from guilt.
Who now shall trace the first original bed
Of the fierce sulphur-stream, which burnt itself
Into exhaustion ? The unnatural fury
Of the subterranean fire, e'en in its birth,
Destroy'd its parent. A thin rind of lava
Lies treacherously smooth o'er the sunk hollows,
And every footstep marches on destruction.
Fain would I grave this truth upon your minds :
The ill, which full-aged and accomplish'd man
Inflicts on man, such, I can well conceive,
Is hard to be forgiven or forgot.

Stern age hates stubbornly—nor can time change
The deep resolve reflecting wrath hath rooted.
But your far enmity is traceable
To half-unconscious childhood's early morning,
And your maturer thought should now disarm it.
Unroll the pages of the past, and see
What made you foes: ye know not, nay, and did ye,
Ye'd blush for shame at this same puling hate.
And yet it is that very cradle strife,
Which, still linked on in fell concatenation,
Hath caused us every ill unto this hour.—
Each grave offence, each fancied injury
Hath sprung from passion and unbated suspicion:
And will ye then, with mad consistency,
Fight out your baby feud now ye are men?

(*Taking the hands of both her sons,*)

Oh! come, sweet children of my heart; resolve
To blot this heavy reckoning from your souls.
Each is alike offending and offended.
Be generous, and remit unto each other
The debt of guilt which blood alone can pay.
The victory most godlike is forgiveness!
Oh! bury deep in your lost father's grave

The hate of old which infancy excused ;
And dedicate to concord your new life,
To holy absolution and to love !

(*She retires from between them, as if to give them room to approach each other. Both remain still, with eyes fixed on the ground.*)

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Hear the voice of your mother, the will of your queen :
Her tones are like music, but weighty her word.
Oh ! be mercy where wrath, peace where battle hath been,
Or, if such your stern purpose, still trust to the sword.
Command me to live, or doom me to die ;
Ye are the masters, the vassal am I.

ISABELLA.

(*After having remained for some time expecting some manifestation of feeling from the brothers, with suppressed sorrow ;—*)

I lack all further words—I have exhausted
The shafts of argument and force of prayer.
Low in his grave he lies whose might could awe you,
And your sad mother stands between you helpless.
Complete your work; ye have full power: go, hearken

To the fell demon whose accursed suggestion
Drives you insensate to perdition : violate
The holy altars of your household gods.
Yea, let these sacred halls where ye were born
Become the scene of mutual fratricide.
Before your mother's eyes murder each other
With your own hands, ye need no foreign aid !
Body to body, like the Theban pair
Rush on to slaughter ; and, in frenzied struggle,
Embrace each other with a gripe of iron.
Exchanging life for life, let each be conqueror,
And sheath his dagger in his brother's heart.
And, that e'en death prove impotent to heal
Your deadlier hate, let the red-column'd flame,
Flaring all ghastly from your funeral piles,
Its sunder'd points of hostile fire divide—
The frightful type of how ye lived and died !

(*Exit ISABELLA. The brothers still remain at a distance from each other.*)

DON CESAR, DON MANUEL, THE TWO CHORUSES.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

They are but air the words she hath spoken !
Yet the rock-based heart which so long withheld
Persuasion's wave, have they mined and broken !—
Ne'er did my sword spill kindred blood,
This lifted hand attests yon Heaven !—Attend,
For ye are brothers !—and beware the end !

DON CESAR

(Without looking at *Don Manuel*).

Thou art the first born of us ; speak thou first !
It is no shame to yield unto my elder.

DON MANUEL

(In a similar attitude).

Say but one kindly word, and I will follow
The fair example which the younger gives me.

DON CESAR.

No ! for that I do know myself to be
The guiltier of the two ;—or, feel the weaker.

DON MANUEL.

Who knows Don Cesar will not dare accuse him

Of meanness. Did he feel himself the weaker
His words were but so much the bolder for it.

DON CESAR.

And think'st thou then so nobly of thy brother ?

DON MANUEL.

Thou art too proud to bend ; or I to lie !

DON CESAR.

This soaring heart could never brook contempt :
And in the moment of our deadliest hate
Thou didst entreat thy brother with respect.

DON MANUEL.

Thou didst not wish my death—Proof have I of it.
A monk once offer'd thee, assassin like,
To murder me, and thou didst slay the traitor.

DON CESAR

(Approaching him).

Ah ! had I known but earlier what thou art,
Full many a deed that was had never been.

DON MANUEL.

And had I known thy heart could so forgive,
Our mother had been spared full many a tear.

DON CESAR.

Thou wert depicted to me prouder far.

DON MANUEL

It is the curse of greatness that vile slaves
Gain treacherous power o'er its too ready ear.

DON CESAR.

It is ! the guilt lies on our vassals' heads.

DON MANUEL

Who did estrange our hearts to bitter hate.

DON CESAR.

Who brought the daily lie, and bore it back.

DON MANUEL.

Who poison'd every act by false constructions.

DON CESAR.

Who open'd every wound they should have heal'd.

DON MANUEL.

Who blew the flame they had the power to quench.

DON CESAR.

'Tis we who were seduced, misled, betray'd.

DON MANUEL.

Made the blind instruments of others' passions.

DON CESAR.

And is it true that all but we are faithless ?

DON MANUEL.

And false—Our mother said it. Thou may'st trust her.

DON CESAR.

Thus then I offer thee a brother's hand.

DON MANUEL.

To me the dearest this wide world affords.

*(They stand, hand in hand, regarding each other
for some time in silence.)*

DON CESAR.

I look on thy fair countenance, and trace
Our mother's beauteous lineaments in thine.

DON MANUEL.

And while in thine I mark the same resemblance
To that loved object, my astonish'd heart
Beats with emotions never felt before.

DON CESAR.

And canst thou really treat thy younger brother
With such sweet courtesy and gentle love ?

DON MANUEL.

And is this mild-soul'd, friend-confiding youth
The proud, o'erbearing brother I detested ?
(A pause. They stand gazing earnestly at each other.)

DON CESAR.

Thou didst assert a claim to those bright steeds
Of Araby, which our lov'd Sire bequeath'd us :
And I refused them to your messengers.

DON MANUEL.

Well, they are dear to thee. I care not for them.

DON CESAR.

No ! take the coursers, take the chariot also
Of our great father—I beseech thee, take them.

DON MANUEL.

Well, I consent ; if thou accept the castle
Which frowns o'er yonder sea-dash'd cliff—the bauble
Which proved so long a cause of rivalship.

DON CESAR.

I will not take it : yet am I content
To dwell together in it with my brother.

DON MANUEL.

So be it then. Ah! why should two possess
Exclusive properties whose hearts are one?

DON CESAR.

Oh! why another moment live divided
Whose mutual wealth springs from their mutual love?

DON MANUEL.

We are no more divided : we are one!

(*They embrace.*)

FIRST CHORUS (*to second*).—CAJETAN.

Why stand we thus ? our Princes' hearts are blended
In love's sweet unity, no more to sever.
Be peace between us ! Their wild warfare ended
Why should our steadier fury hate for ever ?
If they are brothers by blood's warm band,
Our common mother is this fair land !

(*The Choruses embrace ; enter a Messenger.*)

SECOND CHORUS (*to don cesar*).—BOHEMUND.

The messenger thou sentest, gracious Prince,
I do behold returning—be thou glad,
Don Cesar : tidings of no common joy

Await thee : light is his approaching step,
And pleasure's glow beams merry from his eye.

MESSENGER.

All hail ! hail to this State, whose heavy curse
Weighs it no more ! this moment glads my sight.
I see my master's sons, my country's lords
In peaceful intercourse, and hand and hand
Whom I had left in the wild rage of battle.

DON CESAR.

Thou seest sweet love from forth the flames of hatred
Mount like a Phoenix, in new plumed youth.

MESSENGER.

To this fair augury I add another :
My walking staff, all travel soil'd, and dry,
Grows moist with sap, and sprouts with verdant foliage.

DON CESAR

(*Leading the Messenger aside.*)

Tell me ! what tidings bring'st thou ?

MESSENGER.

This blest day
Shall in its mighty round embrace all joy.

E'en she, the lost one, whom so long we sought
Is found, my Lord, nor is she far from hence.

DON CESAR.

Found, saidst thou, found ? Oh ! quick, where is she ?
speak.

MESSENGER.

Here, in Messina, Prince, she lies conceal'd.

DON MANUEL

(*Turning to first Semichorus*).

I see the bright flush on my brother's cheek
Mount fiery fast—the lightning's in his eye—
I'm ignorant of the cause—but 'tis the hue
Of joy, and I participate his rapture.

DON CESAR

(*Aside to the Messenger*).

Come, guide me to her !—Fare thee well, Don Manuel,
In our dear mother's arms we meet again :
A work of moment calls me hence ; farewell !

DON MANUEL.

Do not postpone it. Every joy attend thee !

DON CESAR

(Going, returns).

Don Manuel, far more than I can tell thee
I doat on thy fair presence : yes, my brother,
A sweet foreboding whispers to my heart
That all our future life shall pass in love.
The natural inclination of our souls
Long check'd and ice-bound by our hate, shall now
Push forth its vigorous shoots to the new sun.
I will redeem the life that I have lost.

DON MANUEL.

The bloom that mantles o'er its swelling orb
Proves the full richness of the coming fruit.

DON CESAR.

I do reproach myself with this unkindness
So soon to separate from my brother's arms.
Deep as thyself, it pains me, to curtail
Abruptly thus our new-born joy's first hour.

DON MANUEL.

Obey the moment's impulse : to our love
Be consecrated henceforth our whole life.

DON CESAR.

Could I divulge to thee what calls me hence.

DON MANUEL.

Leave me thy heart! thy secret be thy own.

DON CESAR.

Oh! soon no secret shall divide us more.

Soon shall the last dark fold of mystery fall.

(*Addressing the Chorus,*)

Now let the general ear list this announcement—

The feud is hush'd for ever between me

And my beloved brother. I denounce him

As worse than villain, and as deadliest foe,

And as the gates of hell my soul detests him

Who the expiring embers of our hate

Shall rouse into new flame. Let no one hope

To curry favour, or to win my thanks

Who with insinuation, or dark hint,

And sly officious lies, to wider flight

Would urge the bitter shafts of controversy.

The word that drops incautious from the lip

Of hurried anger strikes no lasting root,

But by suspicion's ear caught up, and foster'd

It creeps in endless propagation on
Like the parasitic weed, clipping its points
Around the suffocated heart, until
Amid the morbid feelings' maze, the wisest
And best are lost for ever to each other.

(*Embraces his brother, and exit accompanied
by the second Chorus.*)

DON MA NUEL AND FIRST CHORUS.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

With wonder I behold thee, gracious prince,
And in that form scarce recognize thyself.
With dry and abrupt speech, thou answer'st absently
Thy brother's words, who, with a heart o'erflowing
With warm affection tenders thee his love !
While buried in bewilder'd thought thou standest
Like one who dreams, as were thy body only
Here, and its actuating soul far off.
He who should see thee thus, might well reproach thee
With coldness, and a heart too proud for friendship.
But I who know that heart, upbraid thee not.
For thou lookst merry, like one full of joy,
And dimpled laughter plays around thy lip.

DON MANUEL.

What shall I say? what answer? Let my brother
Find words to speak his joy;—he is surprised
By new and unknown feelings: he perceives
His ancient hatred fading from his memory,
And wonders at the change within his heart.
But I! I, brought no hatred with me hither.
Scarce can this brain remember why we strove—
For high above the things of earth my soul
Mounts on the soaring pinions of her bliss!
And o'er the sea of vision which surrounds me
Each envious cloud hath vanish'd, and each shade
That mottled life's horizon melted down
Into one even plain of boundless rapture.

I view these proud halls glittering with the pomp
Of kings, and think upon the sweet confusion,
And pleas'd affright of my astonish'd bride
When as their mistress, and their queen, I lead her
Triumphant through their mighty portals home.

Yet loves she but her lover—to the stranger,
And to the nameless hath she giv'n herself:
And little thinks she that it is Don Manuel,
Messina's prince, who round her brow of beauty

Shall twine the coronet of nuptial gold :
Oh, it is sweet to raise the one we love
To most unhoped-for state, and pride of greatness !
Long I denied myself this last delight,
 This issue wanting to my bliss alone.
For deck'd with rank, e'en beauty looks more bright,
 As circling gold relieves the fairest stone.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

I hear thee, gracious Sir, now first depart
From the long silence which hath seal'd thy lips.
Long had I follow'd thee with curious eyes
Suspicious of some lurking mystery :
Yet did the deep respect I owe my lord
Ne'er dare to question what his will conceal'd.
No more the jocund chase could yield thee joy,
The courser's contest nor the falcon's flight.
Oft as the sun sank on the rim of Heaven
Thy form had vanish'd from thy servants' eyes ;
And no one of our Chorus, once the associates
Of all thy dangers of the chase or war,
Was deem'd a fit companion of thy paths.
Why with such envious caution hast thou veil'd

Until to-day thy love and its success ?
What should constrain the mighty to concealment ?
Thy daring soul knows not the taint of fear.

DON MANUEL.

Friend ! happiness is wing'd, and hard to bind :
He should be hidden in some cunning corner,
And silence placed as guardian over him.
For swift he flies if pert loquacity
With heedless hurry lift the veil that shrouds him.
But yet, so near the goal, I dare adventure
To break my long kept silence, and I will.
For, with the first beam of to-morrow's sun
She is mine own—then shall no envious demon
Have further power o'er my confirm'd enjoyment.
I will no more steal trembling to a kiss,
Nor filch the golden fruit of love away :
Nor snatch a moment's unaccomplish'd bliss ;
But each fair morrow shall be like to-day.
Not, as athwart heav'n's arch the lightnings slide
Which sudden night's absorbing gulph devours,
My equal joys shall like the rivulet glide
Smooth as the sand which counts the unvarying hours.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Oh ! name to us the source whence spring those joys,
That we may celebrate the lot we envy,
And yield due honours to our prince's bride.
Say where thou foundest her, and in what still
And distant solitude thy treasure lies.
For, 'mid the chase's unaccustom'd wilds
We've wander'd far and wide throughout our island,
And are familiar with its every path.
Yet hath no track divulged thy mystery ;
So that almost we might persuade ourselves
That magic veil'd it in her guardian clouds.

DON MANUEL.

Thus I dissolve the spell : for e'en to day
Shall the broad sun shine out upon my secret.
Give ear then, and attend to what befell me.
Five times the moon hath circled her bright orb
Since it occur'd—still my great father reign'd,
And bow'd our youth's proud neck beneath his yoke.
Nought heeded I but the wild joy of arms,
And the fierce pleasure of the forest sports.
Already had the chase worn down the day
Amid the echoing woodlands, when it happ'd

The hot pursual of a milk white hind
Drew me far distant from your troop : adown
The winding dell the affrighted quarry flew
O'er bush, and cliff, and pathless rock, and stone.
Ever a spear's throw was it still before me
Yet ever baffling my uncertain aim.
Until at length before a garden wicket
It vanish'd—swift I vaulted from my horse
And rush'd toward the spot with spear uplifted,
When with surprise I saw the affrighted beast
Laid trembling at a fair nun's gentle foot,
Whose delicate hand sooth'd it caressingly—
Moveless I gazed upon the beauteous wonder,
The javelin in my grasp in act to fly—
But she rais'd up her full, dark eyes upon me
Beseechingly—we stood in mutual silence.

How long this pause of life endured I know not,
For all time's graduations were forgotten—
Keen through my heart her glance of fire had pass'd
And made my soul one scene of wild confusion.

What I then said, or what the holy maid
Return'd in answer, it were vain to ask.
For all is far away, like the faint visions
Of indistinct and half-forgotten childhood—

But when returning memory clear'd my brain
 I felt, what yet I feel, her deep pulsed heart
 Panting with throbs of fire upon mine own.
 Just then the tinkle of a bell was heard
 Which seem'd to indicate the call to vespers ;
 And swift as sainted spirits melt in light
 She vanish'd from me, and was seen no more.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

I tremble, Prince, at this recital ! theft
 Hast thou committed on the things of God,
 And soil'd with impure touch the bride of Heav'n.
 He stands accurs'd who violates the cloister.

DON MANUEL.

Now had I one bright path alone to tread.
 My vague, uncertain longings had converged
 Into one focus—life had found its object ;
 And as the pilgrim turns him to the east,
 Where beams in glory his long promised sun,
 So turn'd my every wish, and every hope
 To that one dazzling load-star of my heav'n.
 Ne'er rose the day from Ocean, nor went down
 That did not join in love two souls that lov'd.
 Deep silence wove the chain that bound our hearts ;



The circumambient æther that involv'd us
Alone was witness to our mystic joys
Which needed not the meddling help of man.
Oh ! those were golden hours, and days of heav'n !
Nor did my bliss do robbery on God,
For by no vow was that young heart yet fetter'd
Which gave itself eternally to me.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

The cloister then was but the sacred refuge
Of tender youth, and not her living grave ?

DON MANUEL.

She was committed as a holy pledge
To the house of God, to be redeem'd hereafter.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

What was her lineage ? for, from blood alone
Of pure nobility, springs what is noble.

DON MANUEL.

She hath grown up a secret to herself;
Of country and of birth alike unconscious.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

And hath the foot of time effaced each sign
Might trace the source of her existence there ?

DON MANUEL.

The man confesses her of noble blood,
The only one who knew of her abode.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Who is this man ? speak out, for by complete
Revealment only can I counsel thee.

DON MANUEL.

An ancient servant comes from time to time
The only messenger 'twixt child and mother.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Hast thou made no enquiry from this servant ?
Old age is prone to fear, and light of tongue.

DON MANUEL.

Why should I yield to curiosity,
And place in jeopardy my all of bliss ?

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

What was the general import of his words
In these his secret visits to the maiden ?

DON MANUEL.

From year to year, he comforted her with
The promise of a time which should solve all.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Has he not spoken more decisively
About the promised hour of explanation ?

DON MANUEL.

Within the latter months the old man hath threaten'd her
With some impending change in her condition.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Has threaten'd say'st thou ? fear'st thou then to light
A spark might only serve to lead to sorrow ?

DON MANUEL.

He who is happy trembles at each change.
Where nought is left to win, he fears to lose.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

And yet might the discovery which thou dread'st
Yield further proofs to justify thy love.

DON MANUEL.

Ay ! or completely crush it—so I chose
Security, and was beforehand with it.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

How so, my lord ? I tremble at your words.
What deed of rashness must I augur from them ?

DON MANUEL.

Some moons have pass'd since first the aged man
Let fall mysterious warnings, that the day
Was not far distant which should yield her back
To those from whom she came—but yesterday
He threw all guise away, and plainly promised
That with the young beam of the morrow's sun—
And this is that bright sun which shines to-day—
The mystery which involv'd her should be solv'd.
There was no moment to be lost—my purpose
Was instant taken, and as quick fulfill'd.
I stole the maiden yesternight away,
And brought her here conceal'd into Messina.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Oh! what a deed of rash and desperate daring?
Forgive the freedom of an old man's tongue;
But such is the stern privilege of age
When headstrong youth forgets itself, and sins.

DON MANUEL.

Near to the cloister of the Misericordia
In a fair villa's far removed repose,
Where curiosity's unhallow'd foot
Ne'er dar'd intrusion, even now I left her

When to a brother's long lost arms I hasten'd.
I left her there, trembling with doubt, alone,
And little in expectancy to be
Drawn from that loneliness, with princely pomp,
And high uplifted to a regal throne
Before the subject eyes of all Messina.
For, by yon Heav'n ! she sees me not again
But in all pride and circumstance of state,
And with your brilliant chivalry girt round.
It may not be that the betroth'd of Manuel
Should like a houseless wanderer approach
The presence of the mother whom he gives her.
No ! like a princess, with a princely state
I'll lead her to the city of my fathers.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Command us, Sir ! We wait upon your nod.

DON MANUEL.

I've torn myself reluctant from her arms,
But still my every thought is fix'd on her.
Come on ! hence will we to the throng'd bazaar
Where the dusk Moor in bright temptation rang'd
Exhibits all the Morning-land can boast

Of wealthy stuffs, and cunning handy-work.
First choose the pliant sandal to defend
And ornament her fairy-moulded foot.
Then for her robe select the subtlest web
From India's loom, clear glancing like the snow
Of Ætna, that beams nearest to the light ;
And circumfuse it like the dews of morning
Around the taper structure of her limbs.
Of purple be the zone, with crafty threads
Of gold embroider'd, which unites the tunic
O'er the coy beauties of her virgin bosom—
And choose the mantle glittering with the texture
Of tenderest silk, and like purpurean dye.
Upon her shoulder let a golden locust
Loop its full foldings ; nor forget the clasps
That circle the round marble of her arms.
Nor the red coral, nor the liquid pearl,
The wondrous gifts of hoary Ocean's goddess.
Amid her ringlets wind the diadem
Hewn from the costliest quarries of the mine :
Wherein the fire-effusing ruby's gleam
Shall cross its lightnings with the green smaragdus.
Down from her cluster'd locks let the long veil
Depending deep, embrace her glittering form,

And float around it like a cloud of light,
And with the virgin myrtle's circlet, crown
The accomplish'd beauty of her peerless form.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Thy orders, gracious sir, shall be perform'd ;
For, in the bazaar's glittering rows is found
Each several object you have nam'd, prepar'd.

DON MANUEL.

That done, from forth the regal stalls lead forth
My fairest palfrey—let his colour be
White as the light, like the blest Sun-god's steeds.
And be he deck'd with purple, and his housings
Emboss'd with gold, and crisp with stones of cost.
He shall look royal ; for he bears my Queen !
Yourselves be ready in the glittering pomp
Of chivalry, amid the clanging echoes
Of trump and clarion to lead home your mistress.
I go myself to see all done ; and choose
Two of your troop to bear me company.
The rest expect me here.—What ye have heard
Be lock'd within the casket of your breast,
Until I give you privilege of speech.

(*Exit Don Manuel, accompanied by Chorus.*)

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Say, what sports shall now be ours,
While princes pause from war and crime,
To fill the tedious void of hours,
And urge the halting march of time ?
Man must fear, and hope, and sorrow
For something on the coming morrow ;
His soul from stagnant torpor freeing
To bear the weary weight of being ;
And raise some vivifying breeze
Lest life to stupefaction freeze.

ONE OF THE CHORUS.—(MANFRED.)

Lovely is Peace ! like a cherub child
She sits by the rivulet's margin wild ;
While lambs around her cradle graze
Sunn'd by Heav'n's unnumber'd rays.
Or pours the soft flute's melody
Adown the echo of the mountain ;
Or sleeps 'neath evening's purpled sky
Lull'd by the murmurs of the fountain.
But he who cold existence warms
Glittering war, hath also charms—
Oh ! the life that really lives for me !

Swerving, and swinging, and sweeping to be
On the billows of fortune eternally !
Peace blunts the weapons of the brave.
Dull repose is valour's grave.
Beneath law's ægis let the weak
Tributary refuge seek.
She would equalize us all,
And flatten earth's convexed ball.
But glorious war the spirit tries,
And rouses all its energies.
Raises the vulgar soul to great,
And makes the coward's eye look reckless on his fate.

A SECOND.—(BERENGAR.)

Cupid's shrine stands open to us :
What can the world refuse the fair ?
Hope by turns, and fear subdue us ;
The brightest form in monarch there.
Life's animating soul is Love !
His smiles its shadowy hues remove.
The daughter of the ocean foam
Sweetly beguiles our charmed years ;
Till the forms that deck'd our dream of gold
Are wash'd away in wakening tears !

A THIRD.—(CAJETAN.)

Let rosy Spring enjoy her bloom ;
Let beauty smile, and garlands twine
Round the love-blushing boy, on whom
Luxuriant youth's bright ringlets shine.
But manhood's disenchanted hour
Yields homage to a sterner pow'r.

THE FIRST.—(MANFRED.)

Diana, the lusty hunter's friend,
We'll follow afar in the woodlands deep
Where in night the cluster'd forests bend,
And hurl the Rock-deer from his steep.
For the chase is battle's counterfeit,
The frowning war-god's buxom bride :
And she is worthy of her mate,
And fit to deck a conqueror's side.
We are up with morning's orient beam,
Reveillied by the crashing horn ;
While with dew the foggy valleys steam ;—
Through coppice dank, and meadow fair,
Laving our faint limbs travail worn
In freshening streams of rosy air.

THE SECOND.—(BERENGAR.)

Or shall we rather our fate confide
To the blue goddess of the tide,
Who woos us to her boundless breast
 Bright as the mirror's polish'd plain ;
And build along the billow's crest
 A floating castle on the main ?
Who the mighty deeps hath seen
And o'er their crystal fields of green
On the light ship's rapid keel is hurl'd,
Fortune's his bride, and her dowry the world.
For him self-planted vineyards bleed,
And the harvest is his, though he sow no seed.
For, the sea is hope's wild element,
 Chance's capricious atmosphere ;
There the wealth of kings is spent,
 And the poor are monarchs there.
As the thought wing'd wind of heav'n
In perplexed eddies driv'n,
Shifting round the compass flies—
Varying thus our destinies,
Round the ball of fortune glides.
On the ocean all is motion
Fickle tenure give the tides.

A THIRD.—(CAJETAN.)

But not alone in the realm of waves,
Upon the sea-flood's heaving breast,—
On earth (though firm and deep she rest
On the old eternal pillars propp'd)
Fortune flies, and will not be stopp'd.

I like not this new fangled peace, and still
Mistrust the tongue that fawns but to beguile;
Nor build beneath the lava-furrow'd hill
Though fair and broad the fertile valleys smile.
Too deep hath hate descended in the soul!
Deeds have been done that rise above the gloom
Of Lethe's waves, which impotently roll;
And still the dread conclusion is to come!
Visions of horror float around my head!
To my prophetic thoughts no words be giv'n!
But ah! the unhallow'd mystery I dread,
And bonds unbless'd by an approving Heav'n:
This tortuous path of love which shuns the light,
God's violated fane, this bold bad deed.
Straight is his way who nobly seeks the right,
Bitter the fruit that springs from bitter seed!

CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

In guilt continu'd, as in guilt begun
The fatal history lasts!—In days of yore
To the rank couch of incest the fierce son
His father's bride in rebel triumph bore.
Heaven on the accursed rites in silence low'r'd,
And veil'd its face before the crimes of men;
And dark and deep the injured grandsire pour'd
His curse of vengeance on the bed of sin.
Ah! many a deed of red and burning shame
These walls have witness'd—deeds without a name!

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Or soon, or late, though Heav'n the stroke delay,
Must end in sorrow what in sin began.
Or soon, or late, must come the appointed day
That expiates every crime conceal'd from man.
It was not chance—Inevitable doom
Urges the spell-bound brothers to their fate—
Deep weigh'd the curse upon the mother's womb,
And its abhorred fruit was blood and hate.
Peace! on the pinions of the night
The gods of vengeance urge their shadowy flight.

Enough o'er sorrows to drop the tear
When their divulg'd existence proves them near.

The Scene changes to a Garden looking on the Sea.

(From a Pavilion enter Beatrice.)

BEATRICE

(After listening some time anxiously).

It is not he ! it was the sportive wind
That gently whisper'd to the pine-tree tops.
The sun already bows him to his goal ;
I see the hours glide by with stealthy pace,
And clammy chill creeps o'er my shuddering limbs.
This uninhabited silence' self affrights me,
My eyeballs rest on nothingness ; and yet
He leaves me here to pine and weep alone !

The hum of men comes busy on mine ear,
And the throng'd capital's tumultuous roar :
And far away wild ocean's wave I hear
With stifled groan boom heavy on the shore.
Terror in thousand forms seems hovering near,
In vain my eyes the unfathom'd gloom explore ;

And like the leaf fall'n quivering from the tree
I'm lost in space's wild immensity !

Why did I leave my still and silent cell ?

There did no longing vex, no care annoy,
My heart was peaceful as the meadow's rill,
Without a wish, nor yet devoid of joy.

Now life's wild ocean heaves me on its storm,
The world with giant arm enwraps my form :
And each fond tie asunder have I torn,
Trusting to man,—man, ah ! so oft forsborn !

Where, thought, was thy guidance,

Where, reason, thy rein ?

'Twas passion, 'twas madness
Bewilder'd my brain !

I rent the veil

Of maiden shame

I burst through the pray'r hallow'd barriers that bound
me,

The dark pow'rs of hell wound their false spells around
me,

And far, far away

With the cause of my guilt, and its partner I came !

Oh ! come my belov'd one !

Where art thou, where whil'st thou ?

My pent soul is sighing
For thee, and for freedom ! the pangs of the dying
Each instant I prove.
Oh ! come, my belov'd one, and comfort thy love !—
To thee I clung, the gentle and the mild,
To thee, my only friend on this wide earth ;
Cold look'd the world upon the orphan child,
And sullen mystery veil'd my dubious birth.
I am a child but of an hour ! was prest
One moment only to a mother's breast.
Saw her but once, but once ! and from my view
The vision blessing on the instant flew !
Warm'd by no genial sun my youth was rear'd
In the chill cloister's far remov'd abode
Silent and sadly.—Sudden he appear'd—
Bold as a hero, beauteous as a god !
Oh ! how can words my burning feelings name ?
A stranger from a stranger world he came,
And swift and firm as had it been so ever,
The eternal bond was knit which only God can sever.
Oh ! thou forgive, fair authoress of my days,
If bold forestalling thy appointed hour
I chose my fate, and spurn'd form's dull delays.

Not free I chose—I yielded to that pow'r
Which threads the labyrinth's entangled maze,
Descends on Danaë in a golden shower,
And his stern hand upon his victim lays,
Though chain'd to rocks where clouds eternal lower—
Or where untottering Atlas heaves the skies
High on his courser's storm-rapt pinions flies.—
I cast no longing, lingering look behind,
For a lost home no fond regret I prove—
I love!—hence doubts and scruples to the wind,—
Ah! what is happiness unless 'tis love?
Calm and resolv'd I chose the glorious lot,
And all life's other joys and all its woes forgot!
Alas! I know not either parent, never
Have I enquired for those who would but sever
This heart from him to whom 'tis vow'd for ever.
No! let me live an endless mystery,
Content with knowing that I live for thee!

(*She listens.*)

Hark! his well-known voice I hear;
No! the echo mocked my ear,
And the ocean's muffled roar
Dashing on the distant shore.

No! my dear one comes not yet.
Ah! truant Love, where tarriest thou?
Fear's icy drops are on my brow.

Soon, soon will set
Yon paling sun; these rocks more rude,
More lonely grows the solitude,
And heavier weighs this heart; yet thou,
Inconstant Love! canst leave me now!

(*She looks anxiously about.*)

From the garden's sure retreat
Venture forth no more my feet.
How I trembled, when of late
By yon chapel's fane I sate—
When, by resistless impulse driven,
My soul in sorrow turn'd to heaven.
There, duly still at matin call,
Upon my trembling knees I fall;
And, prostrate in her blest abode,
Weep to the mother of my God.
Had some spy descried me then
I had been lost: they tell me men
Are fierce and false; that cunning hath,
In chamber close, in open path,

For innocence and virtue set
The meshes of her viewless net.
And well the lesson's truth I proved,
When, from my sheltering cell removed,
I bared myself to mortal ken
And ventured to the haunts of men.
Ye solemn rites, when low was laid
The hand that once this sceptre sway'd,
Ye saw my fatal penance paid !
Sure some blest spirit's guardian power
Was o'er me in that awful hour,
When near the daring stranger came
And scann'd me with those eyes of flame,
Whose living lightnings seem'd to dart
Their flashes through my shrinking heart.
Still, still I tremble ! still I see
His fixed glances glare on me !
Oh ! ne'er from earth these looks shall rise,
Ne'er fearless seek my lover's eyes,
While in my tainted soul I press
This load of conscious guiltiness.

(*She listens again.*)

There's a voice among the leaves,
My loved one art thou near ?
'Tis he ; no charm deceives
My heart-instructed ear.
He comes ! ah ! vain alarms,
Be hush'd at length to rest.
I'm circled by his arms,
I pant upon his breast !
(*She rushes towards the bottom of the garden ;*
Don Cesar meets her.)

DON CESAR. BEATRICE. CHORUS.

BEATRICE

(*Shrinking back in alarm.*)

Ah ! what is this ?

(*At this moment enter Chorus.*)

DON CESAR.

Fair modesty, fear nought !

(*To Chorus,*)

The rugged aspect of your weapons scares
Her maiden tenderness : fall back, and bide
In distance, and respect.—Fear nothing, lady !
Beauty, to me, and virgin shame are holy.

(*The Chorus retires, Don Cesar advances
and takes her hand.*)

Where hast thou been ? What demon's might so long
Hath with such cruel caution hidden thee ?
I've sought, enquired for thee ; waking and dreaming,
Thou wert the sole idea of this heart,
Since at the solemn death-rites of our Prince
Like to a radiant angel vision, first
These eyes beheld thee—Ah ! to thee no secret
Was the dominion which that hour bestow'd—
My sparkling eyes, my pale, and stammering lip,
My hand which trembling lay within thine own,
Betray'd me to thee ; bolder declaration
The place's solemn majesty forbade.

The mass' duties call'd to pray'r ; but when
I rose from off my bended knees, and sought thee
With the first glance these eyes could steal from Heav'n,
Thy beauteous form had vanish'd ; and at once
Drawn from my breast with its resistless magic
My every energy, my heart, my soul !
From that day have I sought thee restlessly
'Mid churches, 'mid the domes of palaces ;
In every open, every secret spot
Where maiden innocence might court seclusion,
Wide have my keen-eyed spies pitch'd toil and net,
Until at length, to-day, led by some god

My agent's watchful care was crown'd by fortune,
And in the neighbouring chapel found thee out.
I have thee now once more ; and may my soul
Quit these firm limbs, ere I again part from thee,
Yea, that I now may grapple opportunity,
And guard against the power of envious hell,
Before these witnesses I do proclaim thee,
And hail thee as my wife, and tender to thee,
Pledge of my faith, my knighthood honour'd hand.
I ask not who thou art—I but require
Thy dear self from thyself—nought seek I else.
For, that thy soul is pure as thy bright source
That eye's first glance was surety, pledge, and oath,
But didst thou spring from poverty and shame,
Still, queen of beauty ! thou should'st be my love !
For choice, and freedom have I lost alike.
And, that thou may'st be certain I am one
Free lord of my own will, and of estate
That can upheave the object of my love
With arm of pow'r e'en to my own bright sphere,
It needs but this, that I declare my name.
I am Don Cesar ! and in proud Messina
Breathes not the being mightier than myself.

(Beatrice shrinks back with terror. He

*perceives it, and proceeds, after a
pause,)*

I love thy wonder, and that graceful silence.
Retiring modesty is beauty's crown :
For she is ever doubtful of herself,
And shrinks abash'd before her proper power.
I go, and leave thee to thyself—thy spirit
Shall thus have time to free itself from fear ;
For every novelty, e'en bliss, alarms.

(*To Chorus,*)

Henceforth, entreat her as my destin'd bride,
And your anointed princess—honour her
With all attendance that becomes her rank.
I will return anon to bear her home
In state beseeming her, and worthy me. (*Exit.*)

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Hail to thee, Virgin !
We bow to thy shrine ;
Thine is the crown,
And the victory thine !
Nurse of a proud race which never shall fail !
Legends of glory
Shall gild thy bright story,
Mother of heroes hail ! all hail !

CHORUS.—(ROGERO.)

Hail to thee! thrice hail!

Bright auguries over

Thy fair presence hover:

To this heav'n blest house shedding blessings come
on!

From whose walls the fair garlands of fame are
depending,

Where the sceptre of gold in due order descend-
ing,

From the time honour'd father comes down to the
son!

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

The gods of this house through long ages ador'd,

Who hallow its hearths, and pour wealth on its board

Shall look down in smiles on the bride of its lord!

With youth's fadeless garlands eternally blooming

On the threshold sweet Hebe shall welcome thy coming;

While towering aloft o'er the garland wreath'd doors

In the pride of her place golden victory soars,

Who on Jove's red right hand ever buoyant is stand-
ing,

Her pinions to flights of fresh triumph expanding.

CHORUS.—(ROGERO.)

From this high race, oh ! never
Shall envious time sever
Bright beauty's crown !
Each princess hands down
At the cold hour of death
Unfaded the wreath,
The virtue wove cestus of matronly shame,
And the snow colour'd veil that enshrouded her fame !
But, to us bounteous Heav'n
In mercy hath giv'n
The flow'r of the daughter's young beauty to see
While the fruit of the mother blooms fresh on the tree.

BEATRICE

(*Recovering from her alarm*).

Oh ! woe is me ! mysterious Heaven !
Whither, ah ! whither am I driv'n ?
'Mid such as these, why, why of all
Thy demons am I doom'd to fall ?
Ah ! now I know why o'er my soul
Such unaccounted shuddering stole
Whene'er I heard the accursed name
Of this race of sin and shame,

Whose suicidal poisons dart
 Through their self-immolated heart :
 Oft in my peaceful solitude
 Tales heard I of the brothers' feud,
 And trembled as there came from far
 Rumours of crime, and shouts of war.
 And now faint, helpless, and alone
 Amid the storm of sin I'm thrown,
 Plung'd by the pow'r of wayward fate
 'Mid the wild whirlpool of their hate.

(Flies into the pavilion.)

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

I envy the god-favour'd offspring of Heav'n
 To whom the wide crown of dominion is giv'n.
 Of the mines of the earth, of the clouds of the air,
 Of the caves of the ocean the spoils are his share ;
 And of all that is prized by the children of clay
 He plucks the first down of the flowret away.

CHORUS.—(ROGERO.)

For him 'mid the fathomless waters, the diver
 Culls the purest of pearls from the gold-sanded river.
 Of all that our labours in common afford
 The costliest is kept as the right of the lord ;

'Midst the slaves of his will chance the refuse divides,
But with him what is choicest and fairest abides.

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

All this I yield with pleasure.
But oh! his fairest treasure
What in my heart I envy—is
That beauty's bloom should be also his.

That he alone
Should the bright load star of all eyes possess,
The queen of woman's loveliness
For ever as his own.

CHORUS.—(ROGERO.)

When earth in midnight gloom is lost
Springs the bold corsair on the coast.
Upon the sleeping town he creeps,
And all' to common slavery sweeps.
Lust, and revenge, and avarice,
His wildest wish, he gratifies.

But one bright form is sacred. Who shall dare
To touch the fairest of the fair?
She is his Sultan's prize!

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Follow! and with noiseless tread
Round the sacred threshold spread.
Behind, before, beneath, above,
Guard the chamber of his love.
That no foot profane intrude
On the sainted solitude:
So fulfil his high behest
Who trusts to us his costliest,
His dearest treasure, and his best.

(*Chorus retires.*)

The Scene changes to a chamber in the interior of the Palace.

DONNA ISABELLA

(*Standing between Don Manuel and Don Cesar.*)

At length the wish'd for day, in festive light
Shines forth,—I see my children's hearts united
As thus I gently join their hands together.
And for the first time their poor mother's heart
Breathes free in the wide atmosphere of peace.
No more the mail-clad stranger's ruffian troop

Intrudes its brutal violence between us.
The clang of arms affrights mine ear no more.
And as the pale owl's night accustom'd brood
From the dark ashes of the desolate town
Their long prescriptive roosting place, burst forth
Darkling with gloomy wing the day's fair beam,
When the long banish'd owners home returning
With merry shout, and festive noise advance
Busy and bustling to recall their city
Like a young Phoenix from its fiery grave ;
So, from these halls your old inveterate hate,
With all its obscene followers, scowling malice,
Suspicion hollow eyed, and pallid envy,
Shrink sullen murmuring to their native hell.
While peace, and gentle union, hand in hand
With social confidence, come smiling in.

(*She pauses.*)

But not sufficient is it that to-day
Gives unto each a brother, 'tis moreover
The birth-day of a sister to you both.
Ye start, and look at me with wonder : Yes !
The time is come, my sons, for me to break
My weary silence, and undo the seal
Of a long guarded mystery—I bore

A daughter also to your sire—she lives,
And ye this day shall clasp her to your hearts.

DON CESAR.

How say'st thou mother? have we then a sister
Whose being was unknown to us?

DON MANUEL.

Indeed

In pleasant childhood's gentle hour we heard
That we had had a sister; but that heav'n
In earliest infancy (so ran the tale)
Had ta'en her to itself.

DONNA ISABELLA.

The tale was false;

She lives!

DON CESAR.

She lives? and thou conceal'dst it from us?

ISABELLA.

I render now account of that concealment.
Hear then what happen'd in time long gone by,
And now, is ripening into joyous fruit.
Ye were yet infants; but your mutual hate,

(Now hush'd for ever,) raged already, and
Heap'd care and sorrow on your parents' hearts.
Upon your father as he slept, there came
A vision of strange terror. He did dream
He saw from forth his marriage bed spring up
Two laurel trees, with thick entangled boughs
Close twin'd in one another—'twixt the two
There rose a fair tall lily—on a sudden
That lily turn'd to flame, which in the foliage
And polish'd trunks entwin'd, shot fiercely up
Its spiry lightnings, and at once involv'd
The lofty palace in a flood of fire.

Scared at the prodigy, your father call'd
A seer of Araby, whose piercing eye
Could read the planets, and to whom his heart
And judgment clung far more than I approv'd,
And bade him solve his dream.—The Sage replied
That when the daughter who then fill'd my bosom
Should see the light, her birth should prove destructive
To both his sons, and be the extirpation
And ruin of his race.—I bore a daughter!
And straight your father gave the stern command
To tear my new-born offspring from my arms,
And hurl it in the ocean.—I evaded

The bloody sentence, and by the true care
Of a long trusted servant, saved my infant.

DON CESAR.

Bless'd be the hand that help'd thee! quick expedient
Is ever ready to maternal love.

ISABELLA.

'Twas not the piercing cry of outraged nature
Alone, that urg'd me to preserve its life.
I also, ere the child was born, had dream'd.—
I saw a babe, fair as the god of love
Lie sporting on the velvet grass; a lion
Came from the forest, in his recking jaws
Holding his new ta'en prey, and laid it down.
Caressingly in the soft infant's lap.
And sudden from the clouds swang swooping down
An eagle; clutch'd within its talons hung
A trembling roe, which also he let fall
Fawning, and fondly in the infant's breast:
And both the monarchs of the earth and air
Lay down together nestling at her foot.
A monk did read the riddle of that dream;
A man belov'd of Heav'n, in whom the heart
Found help and counsel in each earthly need;

And thus he spake—" I should bring forth a daughter
Who should unite in firm and ardent love
The fierce contending passions of my sons."

Deep in my heart I treasured up his words ;
And trusting rather to the god of truth
Than to the fiend who lied, preserved Heav'n's gift,
The daughter of my blessing, my hope's pledge,
Her who should prove my instrument of peace
To soothe hereafter your still strength'ning hate.

DON MANUEL

(*Embracing his brother*).

We need no more a sister's love to weave
The band of love ; but, she shall knit it faster.

ISABELLA.

Thus hid from mortal ken, a holy secret
Far from these eyes in solitude she grew
Foster'd by strangers—I denied myself
The sight of that dear face I had so wept for,
Yet dared not look on, fearing your stern father ;
Who by the ever restless phantom haunted
Of apprehension; planted round my path
His sleepless spies, and watch'd my every step.

DON CESAR.

Three moons have waned already since our father
Lay still in the cold grave—why, why defer
So long to bring thy fair flow'r to the light
Of day and joy, and plant it in our hearts ?

ISABELLA.

Why, children, but for your most hapless strife !
Which unappeasedly e'en o'er the tomb
Of your departed parent flaming, stopp'd
All hope of reconciliation.—Could I place
Your sister 'twixt your naked swords, or ye
Hear 'mid the storm of war a mother's cries ?
Could I expose my dearest pledge of love,
The last and holiest anchor of my hope,
To your wild undiscriminating rage ?
'Twas fitting ye should be accustom'd first
To look with brotherly feeling on each other,
Ere like an angel messenger of peace
Between you I dared place a gentle sister.
The time is come—and now I give her to you.
I have dispatch'd my messenger, and wait
Each moment his return, who shall release her

From solitude, and bear her to the embrace
Of a fond mother, and her brothers' hearts.

DON MANUEL.

And she is not the only one whom thou
To-day shall clasp within a parent's arms.
Through all these portals swells the tide of joy !
This long deserted palace teems again
With living crowds ; and in her natural home
Install'd, contentment smiles serenely round.

Now, mother, hear my secret—thou hast giv'n me
A sister—I present you in return
Another daughter lovely as herself.
Yes, mother ! bless thy son !—this heart hath made
Its everlasting choice—I have discover'd
The guide, the friend, the partner of my life !
Ere yon sun sinks in ocean I will bring
The bride of Manuel to his mother's feet.

ISABELLA.

Oh ! with what joy I'll clasp her to my heart
Who blesses with her love my first-born son.
Before her path shall joy's fresh fountains gush,
And every flow'r that decks life's garden pour

Profuse its odours round her ; whilst each blessing
Rewards the pious son whose dutious care
Bestows on me the costliest, dearest gem
That sparkles in a mother's diadem.

DON CESAR.

Nay, mother, do not lavishly expend
Thy every blessing on thy eldest born.
If love commands that blessing, I will bring thee
Another daughter worthy such a mother,
My sweet instructress in its earliest lesson.
Ere gleams the star of evening in the west
Don Cesar shall present to thee his bride.

DON MANUEL.

Almighty love ! best gift of heav'n ! oh, well,
Well have they named thee emperor of the soul !
Life's jarring elements beneath thy touch
Blend into harmony—thou lull'st to calm
The strife of foes ; nor breathes there in the world
The pow'r but bows to thy supremacy.
E'en my proud brother's spirit, which ne'er yet
Own'd mortal master, hails thee as his lord.

(*Embracing Don Cesar.*)

Now can I trust thy heart, now can I clasp thee
To mine, and doubt no more—for thou canst love.

ISABELLA.

Thrice blessed be the day that hath remov'd
From my worn bosom every anxious sorrow.
I see the future glories of my house
Fast bas'd on pillars whose firm cluster'd strength
Shall laugh to scorn the withering blasts of age.
And in the unfathomable abyss of time
Look calmly down unanxious and content.
But yesterday I stood in widow weeds
Childless, and like a cold and gibbering ghost
Alone in these deserted halls: to-day
Three blooming daughters fair as flowers of heav'n
In their first spring of beauty deck my side.
Where is the mother who hath borne a son,
The highest, happiest, in the race of women
Who can compete in dignity with me?
But say, what daughters of a royal house
Bloom on the confines of our land, of whom
As yet I heard not? for my princely sons
Will choose no bride unworthy of themselves.

DON MANUEL.

One day, fair mother, wait ere you remove
The veil that shrouds my happiness—full soon
The hour shall come which shall reveal it all.
Let my sweet bride announce herself; of this
At least be certain, she is worthy of thee.

ISABELLA.

Thy father's very mind, and spirit there
I recognize, whose unconfiding heart
Wrapt in itself, loved ever thus to weave
A web of mystery round its resolves,
And hid each counsel in approachless distance.
Well, be it so; I grant the wish'd delay.
But sure, my Cesar, when I ask his bride,
Will name to me the daughter of a king.

DON CESAR.

'Tis not my custom in reserve and silence
To hide my purpose, mother. Free and open
As this bold brow is every thought—yet that
Which now thou seek'st to learn, of that I own
I am myself yet ignorant.—Who asks
Whence springs the radiance of the heavenly sun?

That which illumines the world, illumines itself;
Its light betokens that it springs from light.
I look'd but in the young eyes of my love,
And through their liquid azure read her soul.
We know the pearl by its pure virgin flame:
But know no test to prove its kind, or name.

ISABELLA.

How! my son Cesar, clear this up, too lightly
To the first idle impulse of thy heart
Hast thou giv'n ear, as to a voice from Heav'n.
The rash impetuosity of youth
I might expect, but not such childish folly.
How was this choice decided?

DON CESAR.

Choice, my mother,
Dost call it choice, when in their mystic hour
Of influence over man the planets reign
Supreme, and in the vortex of their orbs
Whirl the unconscious victim to his fate?
I went not forth to seek a bride—such vain
And idle thoughts intruded not, alas!
On him who stood in the cold house of death.
Yet there I found what there I little sought.

Indifferent to me and nothing worth
Was the whole empty race of prattling women—
None saw I yet like thee, fair mother, whom
Like an incarnate goddess I adore.

'Twas at my father's solemn funeral ;
Mix'd with the crowd, as well thou know'st, disguis'd
Our rank, and state, in common weeds we stood.
Such orders had thy wise discretion issued
Lest our obtrusive hate with wild confusion
Should mar the solemn order of the rites.

With gloomy crape was tapestried the vault
Of the high chapel—twenty sculptur'd cherubs
With flickering torches stood around the altar
'Fore which the death-bier, heav'd aloft and shadow'd
By the pall's white embroidered cross, repos'd.
And on that pall incumbent lay the staff
Of domination, and the princely crown,
Fair knighthood's ornament, the golden spurs,
And with its jewel gleaming zone, the sword.

All lay in hush'd devotion, humbly bending,
When pealing from aloft, invisible,
The organ rain'd its solemn influence down,
And hundred voiced the holy song began.
And, while the roofs still echo'd, the cold bier

With its supporting platform, slow descended
Deep sinking to the unknown world beneath.
But the vast pall with wide extended folds
O'ershadowing hid the sepulchre's dark mouth,
And on the earth remain'd the earthly pomp
Behind, nor follow'd him who was departing.
While on the seraph pinions of the hymn
The unfetter'd soul soar'd upward to high heav'n,
And sought the bosom of eternal mercy !

I call this, mother, back to thy remembrance
That thou may'st judge if in an hour like this
One worldly wish could linger in my heart.
Yet did the mystic power which rules our fate
Select that moment, on this darken'd heart
To pour young love's first radiance—how it happ'd
In vain I ask myself !

ISABELLA.

Say on, and tell
Thy tale to its conclusion.

DON CESAR.

Whence she came,
Or how she came I know not—as I turn'd
My eyes I found her standing by my side

And sudden in my being's core I felt
The power of her near presence—it was not
The witching magic of her gentle smile,
Nor the warm charm that hover'd on her cheek,
No, nor the splendour of her god-like form,
That shed their holy influence on my heart.
There was no sound of words; our souls did seem
To fuse in mystic union as my breath
Mingled with hers—she was a stranger, yet
I felt she was my nearest, dearest friend,
And the fix'd thought flash'd into instant birth,
“ Her must I love, or no one else on earth ! ”

DON MANUEL

(*Eagerly*).

There shone the holy spark of heaven's own light,
Which searching to its centre fires the soul
When hearts meet hearts, and with resistless might
Freedom, and choice, and thought, and will control.
Man cannot loose the magnet chain that round
Those born to bless each other Heav'n hath bound.
My brother's charmed eloquence dispels
The cloud that on my mind's veil'd vision dwells;

His subtler terms my shapeless thoughts define,
And his heart utters all that glows in mine.

ISABELLA.

The will of Heav'n be done ! the gods must order
As seemeth to them best my children's fate.
From the high mountain bursts the mighty stream,
Hews its own bed, and furrows up its road
Regardless of the measur'd path which man
With cunning prescience hath prepar'd to guide it.
So must I bow to that I cannot change,
The will unsearchable and unrestrain'd
Of Providence, which in its mystic loom
Weaves the dark fortunes of my house !—One pledge
Of hope remains alone !—my son's own hearts,
Whose soaring thoughts are lofty as their birth !

(Enter Diego.)

But see where comes my trusty servant ! Now,
Honest Diego ! nearer, nearer ; where,
Where is my child ? My sons know all—there is
No more concealment—Oh ! where is she ? Speak !
Hide her no longer ! We can bear the weight

Of all our rapture ! Come !

(*She moves towards the door with him.*)

Ah ! what is this ?

Thou tremblest, speak'st not ! Oh ! there's in thy look
That which forebodes no good—What ails thee ? Speak !
Cold horror chills me ! Where is Beatrice ?

(*Is about to exit.*)

DON MANUEL

(*Aside, with astonishment.*)

Beatrice !

DIEGO

(*Stopping Isabella.*)

Hold !

ISABELLA.

Where is she ?

DIEGO.

She is not

With me. I bring no daughter to thee !

ISABELLA.

Ha !

By all Heav'n's saints I do conjure thee, say —

DON CESAR.

Where is our sister ? Dotard !

DIEGO.

Stolen, lost,
Torn hence by corsairs ! Oh ! accursed day,
Why have I lived to see it !

DON MANUEL.

Courage, mother !

DON CESAR.

Mother, cheer up ! Constrain thyself at least
To hear the whole.

DIEGO.

I hasted by your order
For the last time along the cloister path
Which I so oft had trodden ; joy had giv'n me
Wings—

DON CESAR.

To the purpose !

DON MANUEL.

Speak !

DIEGO.

And as I enter'd
The convent's well known court, and ask'd impatient
After your child, in every eye I saw

Pale horror staring, and with deep dismay
Heard tidings—

(*Isabella swoons. Don Manuel's attention
is occupied by her.*)

DON CESAR.

Moorish pirates, didst thou say,
Bore her away? Who saw it done?

DIEGO.

Within
A creek not distant from the walls, was seen
A pirate ship at anchor.

DON CESAR.

Many a bark
Finds shelter from the sudden hurricane
Within these bays. Where is this ship?

DIEGO.

At dawn
Already distant from the land 'twas seen
Sweeping with wide stretch'd sail the open deep.

DON CESAR.

Is this their only theft? One prize contents not
The greedy Moor—

DIEGO.

The herds which grazed around
The spot were driven also off.

DON CESAR.

How could
The robbers from the cloister's mid recess
Steal one conceal'd, and guarded ?

DIEGO.

It was easy
To scale the walls with ladders.

DON CESAR.

But how brake they
Into the cells ? the holy sisters, ever,
Are watch'd with jealous vigilance.

DIEGO.

Those who
Are yet unfetter'd by the vows, are free
To rove through all the precincts of the convent.

DON CESAR.

And was our sister then accustom'd oft
To profit by such privilege ?

DIEGO.

Ofttimes I

Have view'd her wandering through its silent groves.
To-day alone she came not back.

DON CESAR

(*After some reflection*).

Theft, saidst thou?

If she were free enough for Moors to steal her
So was she also free to fly!

ISABELLA

(*Rising*).

"Twas force!

My daughter could not so forget her duty
As willingly to follow a seducer!
Don Manuel, Don Cesar! I had thought
To give you both a sister! I must owe her
Now to your own good arms, my boys.—Up, up,
Rise in your might, my sons, nor tamely suffer
A virgin sister to become the prey
Of lawless ruffians—Arm, I say, away!
Launch your keen vessels—search the coast—ex-
amine

Each creek, each inlet—through the world's whole ocean

Pursue the villians ! Give me back my child !

DON CESAR.

Farewell ! I fly to vengeance !

(*Exit Don Cesar. Don Manuel recovering from his abstraction.*)

DON MANUEL.

Tell me, old man,

(*To Diego,*)

When was she first lost sight of ?

DIEGO.

She was miss'd

This morning early.

DON MANUEL

(*To Isabella.*)

And thy daughter's name
Is Beatrice ?

ISABELLA.

It is. Hence ! ask no more !

DON MANUEL.

One question yet, dear mother ! let me know—

ISABELLA.

Away ! to action ! imitate thy brother !

DON MANUEL.

I do beseech thee, tell me where—

ISABELLA.

Away !

See'st thou these tears, this mortal anguish ?

DON MANUEL.

Tell me,

Where didst thou hide her ?

ISABELLA

(*Impatiently*).

Not beneath the earth
Had she been safer, though its centre held her.

DIEGO.

Oh ! heav'n ! a sudden fear chills all my heart !

DON MANUEL.

Fear, say'st thou ? why ? what means this ?

DIEGO.

I have been

The unconscious cause of all this load of ill.

ISABELLA.

Wretch ! what is this ? speak, quick, say what has happened.

DIEGO.

Most gracious mistress ! until now I spake not,
To spare a'mother's heart an useless pang.
Upon the day thy royal lord was buried,
And all in wild and curious hurry, throng'd
To view the unwonted spectacle, thy daughter
(For e'en within the convent's walls the news
Had won their way) thy daughter did beseech me
With earnest prayer, to let her view the rites.
Wretch that I am ! I suffered her to move me ;
And clothed in mourning's deepest weeds, she witness'd
The high solemnity. Oh ! I do fear me
That in the countless tumult of the crowds
That swarm'd from every quarter, the bold eye
Of some unhallow'd ruffian spied that beauty
Whose peerless radiance no disguise could hide.

DON MANUEL

(Aside).

Bless'd be thou for those words ! I breathe once more !
It is not she ! these tokens suit not with her !

ISABELLA.

Thou puling dotard ! didst thou thus betray me ?

DIEGO.

Most gracious queen ! I acted for the best.
I thought I recogniz'd in this her wish
The voice of nature, and the force of blood ;
And deem'd it was the very word of Heav'n
That with some secret and mysterious bidding
Impell'd the daughter to the father's grave.
I yielded to the pious claim of duty,
And thus did ill, where I did mean but good !

DON MANUEL.

Why stand I thus in fear, and coward doubt ?
I will have light, and certainty !

(Is going out, but meets Don Cesar returning.)

DON CESAR.

Don Manuel !

One moment yet ! I follow on the instant !

DON MANUEL

(Impatiently).

A way ! follow me not ! Let no one follow ! (Exit.)

DON CESAR

(*Looking after him with astonishment*).

What means my brother, say, my mother !

ISABELLA.

Ah !

I recognize him not ; he is no more
Himself.

DON CESAR.

I have return'd, for in the hurry
Of my unthinking zeal, I had forgotten
To ask some sign whereby to recognize
My ravish'd sister—how shall I discover
The traces of her flight unless I know
The spot from which the robbers bore her ? Say,
How was the cloister named where you conceal'd her ?

ISABELLA.

To Saint Cecilia is it dedicated,
And hid 'mid mountain woods whose straggling length
Toils up the steep of Ætna, lies conceal'd
Like an asylum of departed souls.

DON CESAR.

Cheer thee, fair mother ! trust unto thy sons—
I'll bring thee back my sister, though I hunt her

Through the wide earth, and wider ocean.— Yet,
One anxious care clings round my heart—I left
My bride with strangers—unto thee alone
Can I with confidence entrust her—hither
Must she be brought—thou shalt behold her, mother ;
And on her gentle bosom thou shalt lose
In sweet oblivion every sense of sorrow.

(*Exit.*)

ISABELLA.

Oh ! when will the deep curse be satisfied
That broods in fearful vengeance o'er our house ?
Some juggling devil dallies with my hopes
With malice unappeasable—already
Within the sheltering port I seem'd to ride
Confiding in the pledge of fickle fortune,
And deem'd each angry wave was lull'd to rest.
The opening land smil'd sweetly in my view
Bathed in the soft light of the evening sun,
When lo ! the gale bursts from the cloudless skies,
And hurls me back into the war of storms !

(*Exit into the interior of the house accompanied
by Diego.*)

The Scene changes to the Garden.

BOTH CHORUSES. *Afterwards BEATRICE.*

The Chorus of Don Manuel approaches clothed as for a festival, bearing the marriage gifts, &c. The Chorus of Don Cesar attempts to obstruct their entrance.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

'Twere well ye fled this spot, and left it free !

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Ay ! when required by better men than we !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Thy presence troubles me. Aavaunt ! I say.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Because our presence troubles thee, we stay.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

My place is here ! Who dares to bid me stand ?

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

That I dare ! here I rule and I command !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Don Manuel, my master, sends me here.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

And mine sends me, whose high behest I fear.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Unto the elder should the younger yield.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

The world belongs to him who wins it. Hence!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Give place! or dearly rue thy insolence!

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Not while this good right-hand a blade can wield!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Must thou for ever, then, thus cross my path?

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Where'er I list I move, despite thy wrath!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

What dost thou here, eaves-dropping villain?

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

And

Who gave thee right to question or command?

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

I stand not here to bandy words.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Nor I

More to vouchsafe the honour of reply.

FIRST CHORUS—(CAJETAN.)

Stripling! at least my years respect might claim!

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Young though I be, I'm old as thou in fame!

BEATRICE

(*Rushing out*).

Ah, me! what mean these swords, these eyes of flame?

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

I heed thee not, boy! nor thy threatening brow!

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

I serve a master nobler far than thou!

BEATRICE.

Alas! alas! should Manuel enter now!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Thou liest! Don Manuel excels him far!

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

My lord is first in council as in war !

BEATRICE.

Oh ! he will come ! the hour is drawing near !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

But for the truce, I would assert my right.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

But for thy fear such motive weigh'd but light.

BEATRICE.

Ye guardian angels ! veil him from their sight !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Respect to law, not unto thee I yield !

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

And thou dost well. Law is the coward's shield !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Strike thou but only first !

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Come forth, good sword !

BEATRICE

(In the greatest agony).

Ah ! they will fight ! I see their glittering blades !
 Ye powers of heaven, oh ! turn my Manuel back !
 Cumber his steps each obstacle ! Ye walls,
 Bar his approach ! let nets entangle him,
 And twine their meshes round his stumbling feet,
 That he avoid this hour of peril ! Oh !
 Ye blessed angels, whom in tears I pray'd
 To speed him hither, frustrate now my wish,
 And turn his steps far from this scene of horror !

(She rushes into the pavilion. As the Choruses are about to attack each other, enter Don Manuel.)

DON MANUEL.

What do I see ? Hold back !

(To Choruses.)

FIRST CHORUS TO SECOND.

Come on, come on !

SECOND CHORUS.

Down with them ! down !

DON MANUEL.

Stand back, I say ! Put up !

FIRST CHORUS.

It is the prince !

SECOND CHORUS.

It is his brother ! Peace !

DON MANUEL.

I strike him dead, here on this sod, who dares
But with a wrinkle of his eyebrow, threat
His adversary, or pursue this quarrel.
What ! are ye mad ? What demon drives you on
To rouse to flame the smother'd spark of strife
Which 'twixt your rulers is extinct for ever ?
Speak ! who began this brawl ? Speak ! I will know it.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN, BERENGAR.)

We found them standing here—

SECOND CHORUS.—(ROGERO, BOHEMUND, *interrupting*).

They came—

DON MANUEL

(*To First Chorus*).

Speak thou !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

We came, great Prince, obedient to the order
Thyself had given, to bring the wedding gifts.
Deck'd for the festival, and least of all
Prepared for war, thou seest it, we pursued
Our way in peace, suspicious of no ill,
And trusting to the solemn truce; when, lo!
Array'd in hostile guise, we found them here,
Arm'd, and with force impeding our approach.

DON MANUEL.

Unthinking fool! is then no spot secure
From thy blind rage? no sanctuary holy?
And doth thy brutal hatred dare invade
The cell where saint-like innocence lies hid?

(To Second Chorus,)

Stand back! there is a holy secret here
Which may not brook your presence! Back, I say!
Your master gives you this command through me.
For we are now one being and one mind,
And my commands are his. Away! Wait ye

(To First Chorus,)

And guard the entrance.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

What remains to do ?

It is most true our rulers are at peace ;
And in the perilous quarrels of the great,
Unask'd, and busy meddling to intrude
Brings oftentimes danger and but seldom thanks ;
For when the great are weary of contention,
With dexterous slight upon the humble fool
Who served them blindfolded they shift the mantle
Of their red guilt, and stand unstain'd themselves.
Let then our chiefs adjust, as best they may,
Their feuds ; we must be silent and obey.

(Exit Second Chorus. First Chorus retires.

Beatrice rushes forward into Don Manuel's
arms.)

BEATRICE.

"Tis he ! 'tis he ! I hold thee once again !
Thou cruel one ! how have I long'd for thee !
And yet thou leftest me a prey to doubt
And quailing terror ! But no more of that ;
I have thee now ! and oh ! thy dear, dear arms
Shall shield thy Beatrice from every ill !
Come ! they are gone ! we now have time for flight :

Away! away! let us not lose one instant!

(She attempts to draw him away. On his resisting she eyes him more earnestly.)

Why, what is this? thus with such moody coldness
Dost thou receive me? shrinking from my arms
As if thou wouldest reject me altogether!
Nay, now I know thee not! Is this Don Manuel,
My friend, my love, my husband?

DON MANUEL.

Beatrice!

BEATRICE.

Nay, speak not! there is now no time for words.
Hence! let us hasten: quick, quick, every moment
Is precious.

DON MANUEL.

Stay! answer me.

BEATRICE.

Hence, I say!

Ere these fierce men return.

DON MANUEL.

Stay, sweet! these men

Will never harm us,

BEATRICE.

Ah! thou know'st them not.

Oh, come! why linger thus?

DON MANUEL.

Beneath my care

What canst thou fear?

BEATRICE.

Oh! they have fearful power!

DON MANUEL.

Sweet trembler! none have more than I.

BEATRICE.

Than thou!

Alone against so many!

DON MANUEL.

Yes! alone!

The men so dreaded, though they seem——

BEATRICE.

Alas!

Thou know'st them not—thou know'st not whom they
serve.

DON MANUEL.

They serve myself. I am their master.

BEATRICE.

Thou!

Thou! saidst thou? My whole soul is chill'd with
horror!

DON MANUEL.

Learn, then, at last, to know me, Beatrice!
I am not that which I did seem to be—
The wandering knight, the friendless, the unknown,
Who gave thee only love for love: my name,
My rank, my power, my race, until this moment
I have conceal'd.

BEATRICE.

And art thou not Don Manuel?
Alas! who art thou?

DON MANUEL.

I am named Don Manuel,
But am the highest that doth bear that name
Within this realm! I am Don Manuel,
Messina's Prince!

BEATRICE.

Don Manuel saidst thou, and
Don Cesar's brother?

DON MANUEL.

Cesar is my brother.

BEATRICE.

Thy brother ?

DON MANUEL.

How ! why dost thou tremble ? Know'st thou
Don Cesar then, or any other one
Allied unto my blood ?

BEATRICE.

Art thou that Manuel
Who lives in hate, and unappeased feud
With his own brother ?

DON MANUEL.

We are reconciled ;
Since yesterday we're really brothers ; not
By birth alone, but by the heart's dear kindred.

BEATRICE.

Reconciled ! Yesterday !

DON MANUEL.

What thus disturbs thee ?
Why dost thou echo all my words ? Dost thou

Know aught concerns our house beyond its name?
And do I know thine own whole secret? Hast thou
Kept nothing back? Nothing! No reservation?

BEATRICE.

What dost thou mean? What had I to confess?

DON MANUEL.

Thou hast said nought to me about thy mother!
Who is she? think'st thou, thou could'st recognize her
If I describ'd her, shew'd her to thee?

BEATRICE.

How!

Hast thou then known her, yet conceal'd her from me?

DON MANUEL.

Oh! wo to me and thee, if I do know her!

BEATRICE.

Oh! she is lovely as the sun's fair light!
I see her now before me! Memory
Gives her new life, and from my depths of soul
Calls up her godlike form—I see the clusters
Of the brown locks that shade her swan-like neck,

I see the pure arch of her vaulted brow,
Her large eyes' deep, dark lustre ; and the tones,
The thrilling tones of her soul-mellow'd voice
Awaken me !

DON MANUEL.

Alas ! thou paint'st herself !

BEATRICE.

Yet I forsook her ! I could bear to leave her
E'en on the morning of that very day
Which had perhaps united us for ever !
Yea, e'en my mother I forsook for thee !

DON MANUEL.

Messina's princess shall be now thy mother !
I'll bear thee to her—She awaits thy coming !

BEATRICE.

What say'st thou ? to thy mother, and Don Cesar's !
Bear me to her !—Oh never, never, never !

DON MANUEL.

Thou shudderest ! What means this dread ? Is then
My mother known to thee ?

BEATRICE.

Accur'sd revealment!

Oh ! had I died one hour before I heard thee !

DON MANUEL.

What can alarm thee now thou know'st me ? now
Thou findest in thine unknown love, a Prince ?

BEATRICE.

Oh ! give me back that unknown love !—with him
E'en on a desert island I were happy !

— DON CESAR

(*Speaking without*).

Stand back ! what means this crowd ?

BEATRICE.

Oh God ! that voice !

Hide, hide me from him !

DON MANUEL.

Dost thou know that voice ?

No, no—thou canst not, 'tis impossible
Thou ever shouldst have heard it !

BEATRICE.

Hence! away!

DON MANUEL.

Why should we fly? It is my brother's voice,
Who seeks me; though, indeed, how he discover'd
The secret—

BEATRICE.

In the name of Heav'n's blest saints,
Bide not his fury! let him not find thee here!

DON MANUEL.

My soul's best love! thy fear bewilders thee!
Thou heard'st me not! I tell thee we are reconcil'd.

BEATRICE.

God, God! protect me in this hour of horror!

DON MANUEL.

Oh horrible foreboding! What a thought
Of terror chills me! Can it be possible?
Is then that voice really no stranger?—Beatrice!
Thou wert—I tremble while I ask—thou wert
At my late father's burial?

BEATRICE.

Alas!

DON MANUEL.

Thou wert, then, present ?

BEATRICE.

Nay, love ! be not angry !

DON MANUEL.

Unhappy girl ! thou wert ?

BEATRICE.

I was !

DON MANUEL.

Confusion !

BEATRICE.

My burning curiosity o'ercame me—
Yet pardon me ! I own'd to you my wish,
But dark and moodily you shunn'd my pray'r
And let it pass unmark'd—and I was silent.
Yet, how I know not, some ill planet's might
Urg'd me with impulse irresistible
To gratify the firm wish of my heart.
An ancient servant lent me his assistance ;
I disobey'd thee, and I went—

(*She embraces him caressingly. Enter Don Cesar and the two Choruses.*)

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

(*To Don Cesar, entering,*)

Thou wilt not

Believe our word, believe then thine own eyes!

DON CESAR.

Tis hell's own jugglery!—What! in his arms!

(*Advancing to Don Manuel,*)

Thou poison'd adder! This, then, was thy love!

For this thou liedst to trick me to forgiveness—

Oh! my deep hate was God's immediate voice!

Down, venom'd reptile! down to hell!

(*Stabs him.*)

DON MANUEL.

Oh! I am slain!—Beatrice! Brother!

(*Dies. Beatrice swoons on his body.*)

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Help!

Murder! foul murder! stand all to your arms!

And be the bloody deed aveng'd by blood!

(*They draw.*)

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Victory!—at length the tedious quarrel's o'er!
One master now reigns peerless in Messina!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Revenge! revenge! Let the foul murderer die
An expiating victim to the murder'd!

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND, ROGERO, HIPPOLYTO.)

My lord fear nought! We will stand true to thee?

DON CESAR

(Stepping between them).

Back! I have slain my foe! my deadly foe!
Him who betray'd my fondly credulous heart,
And aped but love, to lure me to destruction.
A dark and fearful aspect hath the deed!
But righteous Heav'n hath judg'd it to be right!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Woe! woe to thee, Messina! Sorrow, sorrow!
A deed of ghastly horror hath been done
Within thy walls—woe, woe, unto thy mothers,
Woe to thy children, to thy young, thy old,
And woe unto the womb's yet unborn fruit!

DON CESAR.

This clamour comes too late ! here lend your aid !
Oh ! call her back to life !—quick, quick, remove her
From this red spot of terror and of death.

(*Pointing to Beatrice.*)

I may delay no longer here ! the care
To seek my stolen sister calls me hence.
Bear her unto my mother's arms, and say
It is her son Don Cesar who doth send her.

(*Exit Don Cesar. Beatrice is carried out by the Second Chorus, still senseless.—First Chorus, remains with the body of Don Manuel, round which in company with those bearing the bridal gifts they form a semicircle.*)

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Tell me ! for 'tis mystery all,
Whence did this blow like sudden thunder fall —
So long suspended yet so long decreed ?

Ever in my Spirit's eye
Imag'd forth confusedly,

Onward, onward, with noiseless tread
I saw the phantom shadow spread
Of this accursed deed.
Yet fear sits heavy on my heart
When perfected I see
What fancy but pourtray'd in part,
In sad reality;
And my life's frozen pulse stands still
Aw'd by the consummated ill.

ONE OF THE CHORUS.—(MANFRED.)

High the hymn of sorrow raise!
Closed are his lovely eyes!
And low he lies
Wither'd in his bloom of days!
Arrested by fate's ruthless pow'r
On threshold of his bridal bow'r!
But grief sits watching o'er the dead,—
Grief, which will not be comforted!

SECOND OF THE CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

We come, we come,
In princely festival
To lead the young bride home
To her high palace hall.

And boys with gifts, and maidens wait
With jewell'd robes before the gate.
The feast is prepar'd, and the bridal bed,
But the bridegroom thither no bride hath led !
Deaf is his ear, his eye is dim,
Song and music awake not him,
Deep sleep the dead !

WHOLE CHORUS.

Heavy and deep is the sleep of the dead!
He shall wake no more at the voice of his bride,
Nor at hunter's horn in the morning-tide—
Cold on the bloody sod his stiffening limbs are spread.

ANOTHER OF THE CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

What are hopes, and what the pow'r
Which man, the being of an hour,
Builds on the treacherous sands of life?
To day in gentle friendship blending
Hearts were join'd, and hands were press'd ;
Yonder Sun which bright descending
Glows in Ocean their union bless'd.
Now, dust in kindred dust, thou liest !
By a brother's hand thou diest !
The ghastly wound is in thy breast !

What is hope, and what the pow'r
Which man, the being of an hour,
Builds on the treacherous sands of life ?

CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

To his mother's arms away
Bear we now his form of clay !
Boughs from the mournful cypress tear,
Let the keen axe hew them, and twine the bier.
Sign of life no more shall give
That whose fruit is of the grave.
Ne'er its springing growth upheave,
Ne'er its shade o'er wanderer wave !
That which blood hath nourished
Be doom'd to the service of the dead !

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Woe ! unto the murderer, woe !
He flies, he flies in maddening mood !
While in earth's furrows dark and low
Flows thy uncongealed blood !
Where in dread synod met
Hidden from upper light
Sit Themis' daughters in eternal night.

Where speech is never heard, nor song
Rolls the cavern'd depths along :
The unerring three, who ne'er forget,
But unrelenting justice mete,
Aye in their cauldron's hellish glow
Brewing revenge, and wrath, and woe.

SECOND CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

Soon the sign of deeds expires
Exhaling in the sun's fierce fires,
As the transient feeling's trace
Passes from the varying face !
But nought is lost ! all ripens soon or late
Which the dark hours that rule our fate
Receive within their ever-teeming womb.
Time is one broad and vigorous soil ; replete
All nature glows with life, and procreant heat,
Where all is fruit, or seed for fruit to come !

A THIRD.—(CAJETAN.)

Woe to the murderer ! woe past enduring !
Who hath sown for himself the deadly seed !
Blandly it smiles, ere done, and alluring,
But fearful frowns the accomplish'd deed.

Proud is the mien, and firm the eye
When vengeance fires, and hearts beat high ;
But when the blow is struck, relax'd and weak
Quivers the failing hand, and pales the bloodless cheek.
Thus of old with scorpion scourge
The Furies did Orestes urge,
And to the mother's murder drove the son !
With holy justice' placid smile
They could his yielding heart beguile
Till he the deed of death had done !
But when the bosom had heav'd its last sigh
Which had borne him in it so lovingly
Sudden they stop—
Their wizard masks they drop—
Their scorching eyeballs glare
Withering him there
And he knew 'twas hell's furies that circled him
round,
Who strike their fierce fangs in the murderer's heart,
Who from his wearied side never depart,
Who lash him with serpents that never die,
Who from shore to shore chase him unceasingly,
E'en to far Delphos' sacred bound !

(*Exit Chorus, bearing Don Manuel's body on the bier.*)

Scene a vaulted Hall; time, night. The Scene lighted by a large lamp above.

DONNA ISABELLA AND DIEGO.

ISABELLA.

Are there no news receiv'd yet from my sons
Of their lost sister?

DIEGO.

None, my gracious mistress!
But, from their active care we may hope all!

ISABELLA.

Oh! but my heart is heavy, my Diego!
With me it rested to avoid this evil.

DIEGO.

Let not the sting of self-reproach annoy thee;
In what degree of foresight wert thou wanting?

ISABELLA.

Oh! had I sooner brought her to the light,
As the strong dictate of my heart impell'd me—

DIEGO.

Prudence forbade it.—What thou didst was wisest
And best, the event was in the hand of Heaven!

ISABELLA.

Alas ! no joy is perfect ! mine had been so
But for this wayward accident.

DIEGO.

Thy joy
Is but delay'd a moment, not destroy'd :
Think now but on the union of thy sons.

ISABELLA.

Yes ! I have seen them in each others' arms,
Join'd heart to heart—a sight I dared not hope for !

DIEGO.

'Twas not show merely—from their hearts it sprung ;
They are too proudly minded to deceive.

ISABELLA.

Yes ! they are capable of gentle feelings
And tenderest affection—what they love
They also honor—the unbridled license
Which once disgraced them, they abjure; and yield,
Amid the hot and chafing fire of youth,
Obedience to the laws—their very hatred
Wore still the garb of decency. Diego,

I now will freely own, I contemplated
With deep and anxious fear the important moment
When the heart's strongest feeling should expand
In all the burning hues of foward youth.
In natures quick as theirs, love, in an instant
Blazes to madness ; had a single spark
Of jealousy thrown its contagious fire
Amid the smouldering ashes of their hate,—
I tremble at the thought,—had their fierce wishes,
Which never yet were similar, met here
For the first time in dreadful unison—
Well ! thank'd be Heaven ! this thunder-charged cloud,
Which hung like night low threat'ning o'er my head,
Some guardian angel wafts in silence by,
And my freed heart breathes light !

DIEGO.

Yes ! thou may'st now
Applaud thy proper work. With calm, good sense,
And soft, but ever persevering wisdom,
Thou hast done that which their stern father never,
Arm'd with imperial power, effected : thou,
And thy good stars, divide the glory !

ISABELLA.

True,

I have done much! perhaps, my fortune more.
'Twas no light task, through many a lingering year
To bear the weight of such a secret; still
To blind the man whose eagle eye could read
The very soul; and press down in my heart
The bounding impulse of that blood, which strong
As the bright god of fire, strove in its bonds.

DIEGO.

Success so long continued is a pledge
That all will yet end happily.

ISABELLA.

I will not

Praise the bright influence of my planet, nor
Sing hymns of triumph ere the fight be won.
That my ill genius slumbers not, the loss
Of my dear daughter warns me but too well.
Blame or approve what I have done, Diego,
To truth like thine I can have no concealment.
I could not bear to wait in useless patience

The issue of the event ; and while my sons
Are busy to trace out their sister, I
Have not been idle ;—where the art of man
Stops in default, the Heav'ns do sometimes help him..

DIEGO.

Say what you think it fitting I should know.

ISABELLA.

In solitude, on *A*Etna's heights, there dwells
A holy hermit, styled for years long past
The Old Man of the Mountain ; who, residing
Nearer to Heaven than the grovelling race
Of meaner men, refines the earthly sense
By high communion with a purer æther ;
And from the summit of his hill of years
Looks calmly down upon the mazy game
Below, and scans the labyrinth of life.
My house's fortunes ever were his care ;—
Oft hath the sainted man besought Heav'n for us,
And by his prayers turn'd many a curse aside.
Up to his airy cell, e'en now I sent
A young and lusty messenger ; beseeching him.

To give me news of my lost daughter; and
Each moment I expect my envoy back.

DIEGO.

Unless mine eyes deceive me, gracious lady,
'Tis he who now approaches—and whose zeal
Deserves thy thanks.

(Enter messenger.)

ISABELLA.

Speak out! and nor conceal
Evil, nor good—tell me the simple truth.
What saith the message of the Mountain Sage?

MESSENGER.

"I should return immediately"—this was
His answer to me—"for the lost was found."

ISABELLA.

Prophet of joy! blest oracle of Heav'n!
Still hath thy word announced what most I wished.
To which of her brave brothers was it granted
To find their sister?

MESSENGER.

By thine eldest born
The deep retreat that hid her was discover'd.

ISABELLA.

Have I to thank my Manuel for her ! Ah !
He ever was the dear child of my blessing !
Say—didst thou give the seer the votive taper
I offer'd him that he might duly burn it
Before the altar of his patron saint ?
For worldly gifts which common mortals prize
Were dross unto the minister of God.

MESSENGER.

He took the taper from my hand in silence,
And straight advancing to the altar, where
The lamp was burning to the saint, he lit it ;
And with its flame on the instant fir'd the hut
Where he had worshipp'd God for ninety years !

ISABELLA.

What say'st thou ?—What dread history is this ?

MESSENGER.

And three times crying Sorrow ! Sorrow ! Sorrow !
Rush'd from the hill, motioning to me in silence
Neither to follow, nor look back on him—
Tremblingly I obey'd, and hasten'd hither.

ISABELLA.

This contradiction of himself, repels me
 Back on the ever stormy waves of doubt,
 Making confusion worse confounded—Manuel,
 My eldest son, hath found his ravish'd sister ;
 Yet little boots me the predicted blessing
 Accompanied by such ill-omen'd deed !

MESSENGER.

Look back, most honour'd mistress, and behold
 Before thy face the hermit's word fulfill'd.
 For, or my eyes deceive me, or thy daughter,
 The lost one whom so long in vain we sought,
 Girt by thy son's bright chivalry appears.

*(Beatrice is brought in senseless on a litter by
 Second Chorus, and placed in front of the
 Stage.)*

ISABELLA. DIEGO. MESSENGER. BEATRICE.

(Chorus, consisting of all the Knights of Cesar.)

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Great queen ! obedient to thy son's command,
 We lay this fair maid at thy feet,—for thus
 He order'd us to do, and thus to say :
 “It is thy son, Don Cesar, who doth send her.”

ISABELLA

(Is rushing towards her, but starts back).

Oh heav'n ! she's pale, and without life !

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

She lives,
And will awaken, give her but the time
To rouse her senses from the stunning trance
That wraps them in oblivion.

ISABELLA.

Oh ! my child ;
Child of my sorrow and my pain ! is't thus,
Thus that we meet again ? Is this the manner
Of thy late entry to thy father's house ?
Oh ! let me press thee to my heart, until
I kindle thy life at my own ; until
The active blood, quick circling through thy veins,
Thaw into pulses from this frost of death.

(To Chorus,)

Tell me what terrible thing hath happened ! Say,
Where was she found ? How was the gentle child
Brought to a state so desperate ?

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

The tale

From me thou must not learn ! mute is my voice !
Thy son Don Cesar will explain it to thee
In order due ; for he it is who sends her.

ISABELLA.

My son, Don Manuel, sure thou wouldest say !

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Thy son Don Cesar sends her !

ISABELLA.

Was it not

Don Manuel the old man named ?

DIEGO.

It was,

Most gracious Queen ! such were the hermit's words.

ISABELLA.

Whiche'er it be, he hath rejoic'd my heart !
I owe to him my daughter ! Blessings on him !
But why must some fell demon thus embitter
This long and deeply wept-for moment's joy ?
Why must my bliss be chequer'd thus with sorrow ?

I see my daughter in her father's home,
 But ah! she sees not me, perceives me not,
 Nor can reciprocate her parent's joy!
 Oh! open ye soft eyelids, glow once more
 Ye hands with pulses, heave, thou lifeless bosom,
 And beat to rapture! Here, Diego, here!
 It is my daughter! She, the long conceal'd,
 The sav'd at last! She, she whom to the world
 With pride, with transport, I proclaim as mine!

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

In the dark future's gloom methinks I see
 New forms of horror! and in trembling awe
 Await the unravelling of the web of Fate!

ISABELLA

(*To Chorus, who are disturbed and astonished.*)
 Oh! ye are hearts of stone!—From the harsh mail
 That steels your breasts, my uncongenial joy
 Rebounds, like billows from the senseless rock!
 In vain in this dark circle do I seek
 One moisten'd eye whose sympathetic tear
 Shall say it feels with me! Where are my sons,
 That I might see one face which should reflect

The light that glows on mine ?—I seem as if
The lions of the desert stalk'd around,
And all the wild sea's monsters glar'd upon me !

DIEGO.

Her eyelids open, she revives !

ISABELLA.

She lives !

Oh ! let her first look bless her mother !

DIEGO.

Soft !

Again her quivering eye is clos'd !

ISABELLA.

Stand back !

The sight of strangers scares her—

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

(*Retreating.*)

I'm best pleas'd

To hide me from her glance.

DIEGO.

She stares upon thee,

Yet knows thee not.

BEATRICE

(*Reviving*).

Where am I? I should know

Those features—

ISABELLA.

Peace! her senses are returning.

DIEGO.

What means she? See, she sinks upon her knees!

BEATRICE

(*Kneeling before Isabella*).

Oh lovely features of my angel mother!

ISABELLA.

Child of my heart! Come to thy parent's arms!

BEATRICE.

Low at thy feet behold thy guilty child!

ISABELLA.

I hold thee now once more! all is forgotten!

DIEGO.

Look, lady, upon me. Know'st thou this face?

BEATRICE.

Those are the grey hairs of the good Diego.

ISABELLA.

Of the true guardian of thy years of childhood.

BEATRICE.

And do I rest once more on the dear bosom
Of those who love me ?

ISABELLA.

Henceforth, death alone

Shall separate us.—

BEATRICE.

Wilt thou then no more

Cast me away 'mid strangers ?

ISABELLA.

From this day

We are for ever one. The fates are satisfied !

BEATRICE.

And am I really prest unto thy heart?
Was all I suffer'd but a dream ? Oh ! mother !
That dream was horriblé ! I saw him dead !
Dead at my very feet !—How came I here ?—

I cannot recollect—Oh ! I'm so happy,
So safe in thy dear arms—they would have borne me.
To the Queen-mother of Messina—rather
Had I been borne to the grave !—

ISABELLA.

Compose thyself
My child !—Messina's princess—

BEATRICE.

Name her not !
At that ill-omen'd sound, the frosts of death
Creep chilly trickling through my every vein !—

ISABELLA.

Hear me !

BEATRICE.

She bath two sons, who hate each other
Like death !—They call them Manuel and Cesar.

ISABELLA.

I am herself, sweet trembler !—Know thy mother !

BEATRICE.

What dost thou say ?—what horrid sound was that ?

ISABELLA.

I am thy mother and Messina's princess.

BEATRICE.

Thou ! thou Don Manuel's mother, and Don Cesar's ?

ISABELLA.

Their mother, love, and thine ! thou nam'st thy
brothers.

BEATRICE.

Ah ! say it not ! it is too horrible !

ISABELLA.

What ails thee, sweet ? what shocks thee thus ?

BEATRICE.

(*Looking wildly round her till her eyes fall
on the Chorus.*)

'Twas they !

Now, now I know them ! ah ! no dream deceiv'd me !

'Twas they ! 'twas they ! oh ! 'tis all horrible truth !

Wretches ! where have ye hid him ? (To Chorus.)

(*She rushes towards Chorus, who turn from
her. A dead march is heard in the distance.*)

CHORUS.

Sorrow ! Sorrow !

ISABELLA.

Hid whom? What is all truth? Ye stand in silence,
Yet seem to comprehend her — In your eyes,
And in your voices' broken tones I read
Some dreadful secret — Say — What is it? — Speak!
Speak! I will know it! Why do ye fix your pale
And glazed eyes on yonder doors? What mean
These sounds of woe that faintly mock mine ear?

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

They come! in horror and despair they come!
Steel thy firm heart, compress thy flutt'ring breath!
And bear with manlike constancy the doom
Of Heav'n, and agonies far worse than death!

ISABELLA.

Who come? what waits me? Hark! throughout the
walls
That tremble to the echo, long and loud
The death wail knells! — Where are my sons — my
sons?

(*First Chorus brings in Don Manuel's corpse
on a bier covered with a black veil.*)

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Through the streets of the city,
Follow'd by wailing,
Stalks stern misfortune!
To day one assailing,
Another to-morrow!
Gaunt is her step, and wild her looks;
At every door by turns she knocks—
Those whom her hand hath spar'd, ah! who shall tell?
Tidings of sorrow
Lesser or greater,
Sooner or later,
She brings to every roof where man and misery dwell!

CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

When autumn leaves are scattering
As the year goes round;
When nerveless age is tottering
To the cold grave bound,
Nature obeys
Her own establish'd ways,
Her everlasting laws!
Nor is there cause
Why man should dread the blow deferr'd so long.

But sterner lessons we must wait
And direr prodigies from Fate !
The redd'n'd hand
Of Murder rives the holiest band,
 And o'er the Stygian wave
Death ravishes the brave,
 The beautiful, the young !

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

When gathering clouds Heav'n's light abate,
 And deep the sullen thunder groans,
Itself within the grasp of fate
 Each human heart with shuddering owns.
But on the heights where never clouds appear
 Thunders may roll, and lightnings hiss !
Oh ! in thy thoughtless days of bliss,
 Suspect misfortune near !
Trust not to goods of this world, nor believe
 The radiance fadeless which its gems diffuse :
He who possesses much must learn to lose,
He who is happy must learn to grieve !

ISABELLA.

What do I hear ? What doth this veil conceal
That drags me to it with resistless force,

Yet pushes me with Fear's cold fingers back ?

*(To Beatrice, who throws herself between her
and the bier,)*

Away ! whate'er it be I will look on it.

(She draws back the veil.)

Almighty pow'rs of Heav'n ! it is my son !

*(She stands fixed in horror. Beatrice sinks
shrieking on the body.)*

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED.)

Mother of many sorrows ! Yes, it is

Thy son, thy lov'd one ! thou thyself hast said

The word of woe ! Our lips are guiltless of it !

ISABELLA.

My son ! my Manuel ! Oh ! eternal mercy !
And do I find thee thus ? must thou redeem
Thy sister with thy life ? where was thy brother
To shield thee ? Oh ! accursed be the hand
That dealt these wounds ! accurs'd be she who bore
The murderer of my son ! curs'd be her race,
Her name, her country !

CHORUS.

Sorrow ! Sorrow ! Sorrow !

ISABELLA.

Thus then ye keep your faith, ye juggling pow'rs !
This is your boasted truth ! Oh ! woe to him
Who trusts you in his fond credulity !
Why have I hop'd, why trembled, fear'd, believ'd,
If this must be the end ? Oh ! ye who here
Stand shudd'ring round me, on my madden'd sorrow
Staring with ghastly eyeballs, learn the falsehood
With which our dreams and their expounders cheat us !
Henceforth let no man trust the signs of Heav'n !—

One day, when first I felt I had become
The mother of yon weeping child, her father
Dream'd that from forth his marriage bed he saw
Two laurel trees rise up—between the two
There grew a lily—suddenly it chang'd
To flame ; and seizing on the cluster'd foliage
Clung round it with wild fury, and involv'd
The lofty palace in a flood of fire—
Scared at the prodigy, my husband, from
An augurer, a foul magician, sought
Its explanation.—The dark seer replied
When my charg'd bosom should bring forth the daughter
Who form'd its burthen, that his sons by her
Should both be murder'd, and his race destroy'd.

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN AND BOHEMUND.)

What hast thou said, great mistress?—Sorrow, sorrow!

ISABELLA.

Her father therefore gave command to slay her—
But I preserv'd her from the threaten'd fate.
Poor wretched one! from thy warm mother's breast,
In childhood thou wert torn, lest grown to woman
Thou shouldst destroy thy brothers; and one brother
Now falls beneath a base-born ruffian's hand—
Sweet innocent! thou didst not kill him!

CHORUS.

Sorrow!

Oh sorrow, sorrow!

ISABELLA.

The false idol's worshipper

Deserv'd no credence from me—but my soul
Was strengthen'd by a better faith—a mouth
I held for true, declar'd thou shouldst hereafter
Unite in love my sons' disjoined hearts.
See how the oracles belie themselves
That laid both curse and blessing on thy head.
Unhappy girl! thou hast done nought to warrant
The execution of the curse, and time

Was not allow'd thee to perform the blessing.
 Both oracles with parity of falsehood
 Lied—their priz'd art is a mere empty nothing !
 Or they are traitors or they are betray'd.
 To man nought of the ever mystic future
 Is giv'n to learn—although his would-be knowledge
 He seek below from the dark floods of hell,
 Or draw above from the pure source of light.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Peace, wild blasphemer! curb th' insensate speech
 Which madness dictates ; let no sound be giv'n
 To thoughts which God's eternal truth impeach—
 The event shall justify the words of Heav'n.

ISABELLA.

I will not curb my tongue ! aloud, aloud,
 As my full heart impels me will I cry.
 Why do we haunt the holy house of God,
 And lift to Heav'n our fondly pious hands ?
 Good natur'd fools ! What yet was ever gain'd
 By bigot faith ? 'Tis as impossible
 To reach the Gods, Heav'n's far inhabitants,
 As shoot an arrow to the moon's round disk.
 To mortals is futurity wall'd up ;

No pray'r can pierce the brazen vaulted Heav'n.
Right fly the birds of augury, or left,
Wander the devious planets wide or near,
There is no meaning in the book of nature.
The dream expounder dreams, and every sign deceives !

SECOND CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

Hold, hold, unhappy woman ! Sorrow, sorrow !
Blind with excess of light thou blam'st the sun !
Remember there are gods ! their vengeance dread,
Which hangs like low'ring thunder o'er thy head !

BEATRICE.

Oh ! mother, mother, wherefore didst thou save me ?
Why at my birth didst thou not cast me forth
To the dark curse which, ere I lived, pursued me ?
Short-sighted parent ! why conceive thyself
Wiser than the omniscient gods, who knit
The distant to the near, and in the seed
Of the deep present, view the future's fruit ?
To the destruction of thyself and house
Thou hast withheld from the stern pow'rs of death
The victim they demanded—doubly, triply,
They now reclaim her —think not that I thank thee

For the sad gift of life,—life, that hath been
One long dark scene of misery and guilt!

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

(*Looking anxiously towards the door.*)

Break forth, thou crimson wound!

Flow, purple flood!

Gush from the yawning ground,

Fountains of blood!

CHORUS.—(BERENGAR.)

The brazen clang

Of their feet I hear;

The snakes of hell

Hiss in mine ear!

I know the Furies' tread!

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Crumble, ye walls! and thou,

Proud portal! bow

Beneath their doomed feet thy quailing head!

Shadows and clouds arise, arise!

Steaming from hell!—from our sear'd eyes

Blot out the lovely day!

Fly, ye once guardian gods,

From these accurs'd abodes,

And give the deities of vengeance way.

ISABELLA. BEATRICE. CHORUS. DON CESAR.

(*As Don Cesar enters, the Chorus separates from before him in confusion. He remains alone in the middle of the Stage.*)

BEATRICE.

Alas ! 'tis he !

ISABELLA.

Oh ! my lov'd Cesar, is it
Thus that we meet again ? Look here, and see
The trespass of a hand accr'sd of heav'n.

(*Leads him to the bier. Don Cesar shrinks back with horror, and covers his face.*)

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN, BERENGAR.)

Break forth, thou crimson wound !
Flow, sable flood !
Gush from the yawning ground,
Fountains of blood.

ISABELLA.

Thou shudderest, and art dumb ! yes ! this is all
That now remains to thee of thy dear brother.
There lie my hopes, and thine ! The opening flow'r

Of your young friendship dies in the bud, and never,
Ah ! never shall I see its golden fruit !

DON CESAR.

Be patient, mother ! in our hearts we both
Intended peace ; but Heav'n demanded blood.

ISABELLA.

Ah ! well I know thou lovedst him ! I saw
With joy, the bands of your affection woven—
Thou wouldest have borne him in thy heart, and paid
With love's rich usury the loss of years.
But savage murder stepp'd between you.—Now,
Alas ! thou canst do nothing but revenge him !

DON CESAR.

Come, mother, come ! this is no place for thee ;
Oh tear thyself from this dark scene of terror.

ISABELLA

(*Falling on his neck*).

Still, still, thou liv'st !—thou ! now my only one !

BEATRICE.

Ah ! mother, know'st thou what thou dost ?

DON CESAR.

Oh ! sate

Thy tears on this true bosom ! Thy lost son
 Is not for ever lost, for his love lives
 Immortally in thy own Cesar's heart.

FIRST CHORUS.—(CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED.)

Break forth, thou crimson wound !
 Ope thy dumb mouth ! Flow, flow, thou sable flood !
 Burst from the shuddering ground,
 Fountains of blood !

ISABELLA

(*Taking the hands of Cesar and Beatrice*).
 My darling children !

DON CESAR.

Oh ! how I rejoice
 To see her in thy gentle arms, my mother !
 Yes ; let her be thy daughter ! for my sister——

ISABELLA.

I thank thee that thou hast restored her to me !
 Well hast thou kept thy plighted word to save her.

DON CESAR

(*Astonished*).

Whom, mother ? Whom have I restored ?

ISABELLA.

Thy sister.

Her who now weeps upon this bosom!

DON CESAR.

"Her!"

Is she my sister?

ISABELLA.

Who should be but she?

DON CESAR.

My sister!

ISABELLA.

She whom thou thyself didst send me.

DON CESAR.

And Manuel's sister too?

CHORUS.

Oh! sorrow! sorrow!

BEATRICE.

Lost—ruin'd mother!

ISABELLA.

I'm all wonder! speak!

DON CESAR.

Accursed be the day that gave me birth!

ISABELLA.

Great God !

DON CESAR.

Accursed be the womb which bore me !
And curs'd, oh ! trebly curs'd be thy concealment—
The cause of all these more than horrors ! Now !
Now let the thunder fall that splits thy heart !
No more, in mercy, do I bid it hold !
Know, then 'twas I ! I did it ! I destroy'd
My brother ! I surprised him in her arms !
She was my love—my life ! my dear, dear bride,
Whom I had chosen from the world ! I found him
Twined in her arms ! Now, now thou know'st it all !
And is she really, really then my sister
And his ? Then have I done a deed of horror
Which laughs remorse and penitence to scorn !

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

The fatal word is spoken. Thou hast heard
The last, the worst that angry Heav'n ordains !
The things foretold of prophets have appear'd,
And Fate's resolve immutable remains !
While he whose cunning would avoid it, still
To more assured completion drives the ill !

ISABELLA.

What care I now for yonder gods? Their falsehood,
Or their established truth, are now to me
Alike indifferent—they have done their worst!
I do defy them now to wound me deeper
Than they have done already! he who possesses
Nought more to fear for, dreads their wrath no longer.
Low at my feet lies one dear murder'd son!
From him who lives I separate myself!
I do renounce—abjure him! I have nourish'd
At this unnatural breast a basilisk
To sting my dearer, better son to death!
Come, Beatrice! this is no place for us.
We may not linger. To the gods of vengeance
I do devote this house! Crime brought me hither,
And crime now drives me hence! With deep reluctance
I enter'd it—have dwelt in it with fear—
And leave it in despair! All this I've borne,
Guiltless of blame myself. But the dark oracles
Are vindicated, and the gods absolved!

(Exit with Diego.)

BEATRICE. DON CESAR. CHORUS.

DON CESAR

(*Stopping Beatrice*).

Stay, sister ! Sister, do not leave me thus !

Although my mother curse me, and this blood—
A brother's blood—cry out to Heav'n against me :
Though all the world shout my damnation, yet
Curse thou me not ! From thee I cannot bear it !

(*Beatrice points with averted eyes to the corpse.*)

DON CESAR.

I did not kill thy lover ; mark me, girl !
It was thy brother whom I murder'd—thine
And mine ! To thee the one departed is.
No nearer than myself, the accurs'd survivor.
And I am worthier pity far than he :
For innocent he died, and I live guilty !

(*Beatrice bursts into tears.*)

Weep for thy brother ! I will weep with thee.
Ay, and do more than weep ; I will avenge him !
But weep not for thy lover ! I will not
Endure the preference which thou giv'st the dead.

Oh ! let me draw this last, this only comfort
From forth my sorrow's bottomless abyss,
The thought that he belong'd no more to thee
Than I ! The consummation of our fate
Hath equalized our rights and miseries.
In sad similitude of ill, we all,
Three loving creatures form'd for mutual joy,
Sink in one common ruin, and divide
Alike the melancholy right of tears !
But, when in spite of me, I think thy sorrows
Flow for the lover rather than thy brother,
Then rage and envy mingle with my grief,
And the last comfort of despair forsakes me.
I cannot bring, as fain I would, the victim
With joy to his high manes ; but I'll send
My soul to his in gentle embassy
To sue for pardon, when I know thou wilt
Unite our dust in the same funeral urn !

(*He catches her in his arms with the deepest tenderness.*)

Thee did I love, as never yet I loved ;
While yet thou wert a stranger to me ! and
Because I so adored thee, I now bear
The deep and damning curse of fratricide.

My only crime was love of thee—but now
Thou art my sister, and I claim thy pity
As holy tribute, and as nature's right.

(*He looks at her fixedly, and with an air of sorrowful expectation; then turns abruptly from her.*)

No! no! I cannot bear to see those tears.
In the dead's fearful presence, all my courage
Fades fast away, and doubt distracts my heart!
Oh! leave me in my error! weep in secret!
See me no more! oh! never more! Nor thee,
Nor my stern mother will I e'er behold.
That mother never loved me! at the last
Her heart betray'd her: sorrow open'd it;
She said he was her better son. Her life
Was one long scene of black dissimulation,
And thou art false as she. Nay, no constraint;
Show all thy hatred! my detested face
Ne'er shalt thou see again—farewell for ever!

(*Exit Don Cesar. Beatrice remains a moment struggling with her feelings, and then rushes out.*)

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

1.

Oh ! well is he, and blest his condition,
Who, in his native home's sweet rest,
Far from the mazes of life's wild transition,
Sleeps like a child on nature's breast.

2.

I look'd on the house of the mighty with sorrow.
High o'er the earth to-day they soar,
Mocking the sun. Alas ! to-morrow
Their place rememb'reth them no more !

3.

Soft is his bed, and to watching a stranger,
Who, far from life's tempestuous wave,
Timely advised, hath retired from danger
In the deep cloister's silent cave.

4.

Who the proud thoughts that excite but to grieve us,
Hath with proud fortitude repress'd ;
And the vain wishes that ever deceive us
In his calm bosom lull'd to rest.

5.

O'er him, amid the whirl of confusion,
 Harmless sweeps passion's wildest storm ;
 Ne'er, in his still asylum's seclusion,
 Views he humanity's saddening form.

6.

Only 'mid grovelling crowds the traces
 Of crime and misery we meet :
 Like the blue plague, which shuns the high places,
 And stalks through the city's misty street.

BERENGAR, BOHEMUND, MANFRED.

On the mountains is freedom ; no clammy breath
 Mounts there from the rotting caves of death !
 Blest is the wide world every where
 When man and his sorrows come not near.

THE WHOLE CHORUS.

On the mountains is freedom, &c.

DON CESAR. CHORUS.

DON CESAR.

I use the empty right of sovereignty
 Now for the last time, to consign to earth
 This much-loved corse. It is the last occasion
 On which the dead assert supremacy.

Hear, then, the solemn purport of my will,
And to the uttermost fulfil it! Yet,
In fresh remembrance of you all, remain
The form and usages with which ye bore
Your Prince's body to its last abode.
Scarce hath the echo of your funeral wail
Ceased in these halls, when, lo! another bier
Crowds in the grave that which preceded it.
One funeral torch is lighted at the other;
And the returning mourners, on the steps
Of the dark vault, are met by those descending!
In the high chapel of our palace, then,
Where sleeps my mighty father's dust, arrange
In order due the festival of death
In solemn silence and with closed doors,
And execute the whole as then ye did!

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

With duteous speed we will perform the work
Thou hast commanded. Still, in lofty air,
The scaffold towers, in dark remembrance of
The solemn rites late pass'd. No hand hath moved it,
No touch profaned the structure rear'd to death!

DON CESAR.

It was no augury of good, to leave
Unclosed the gaping portals of the tomb,
Amid the habitations of the living !
How happ'd it, that, the solemn office o'er,
The ill-omen'd pile remain'd ?

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

The press of time,
And your lamented strife, which at the moment
Burst forth distracting all Messina, drew
Our care from the departed ; and neglect
Forsook the hallow'd sanctuary.

DON CESAR.

Well !

To business, then ; and, ere this night be past,
Perform a work which only night should witness.
Let the young sun to-morrow find this house
Cleansed from all stain, and pour his undimm'd beams
In orient glory on a happier race.

CHORUS.

Say, shall we summon, from their deep retreats,
The sainted brotherhood of monks, to chaunt,

According to the church's ancient rite,
The solemn death mass; and with holy dirge
To hymn the dead to his eternal rest?

DON CESAR.

Hereafter, 'mid the incensed tapers' glare,
Let stoled priests, above our early grave,
Hymn endless hallelujahs! for to-day
Their pious offices were vain. Fell murder
Hath no communion with the things of God!

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Oh! yet reflect, ere proud despair impel thee
To vengeance on thyself—thou art beyond
The law of man, and long and patient prayer
May turn aside the wrath of injured Heav'n.

DON CESAR.

Since man dare not inflict my punishment,
Myself upon myself will execute it.
Heav'n's mercy pardons expiable sins,
But blood alone avenges blood!

CHORUS.

The waves
Of stern misfortune, which, piled up in wrath

Come rushing on thy house it should be thine
To soothe to calm, not lash to added fury.

DON CESAR.

I am the only victim that can satisfy
The curse which weighs upon that house—Death, death
Alone, can burst the linked chain of fate.

CHORUS.

To the high Lord of Heav'n thou'rt answerable
For all the sorrows of this land, if thou
Deprive it of its sole remaining head.

DON CESAR.

To the dark pow'rs of death account is due
Of my foul guilt—to them I render it;
And let a happier god protect the living!

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Hope spreads her beams wide as the glorious sun !
The grave alone is hopeless—weigh this well!

DON CESAR.

In silence weigh thy duty as a servant!
Let me obey the dark and mystic spirit
Which goads me on!—Alas! no one of the happy

Can read my soul—Dost thou not honour me
As thy liege lord, and crowned prince, yet dread
The murderer, on whom the sealed curse
Of guilt is set—or rather yield thou reverence
To that accomplish'd misery, which e'en
The gods respect!—He who hath once experienc'd
That which I feel in this sad heart, nor owes,
Nor yields account to mortal man!

DONNA ISABELLA. DON CESAR. CHORUS.

ISABELLA.

(*As she comes forward she casts uncertain glances at Don Cesar. At last she approaches him, and speaks collectedly.*)

These eyes should never have beheld thee more!
So had I vow'd in my deep settled grief!
But all resolves melt into viewless air
Form'd by a mother in unnatural anger
Against the voice within her heart—my son
Tidings of direful import have impell'd me
From the waste habitation of my woe
Once more into the world—Is it then true?
And must one day rob me of both my sons?

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Rooted he stands in stubborn mood
With desperate spirit sternly bent to dare
The darkling path that leads to death !
Try thou the force of kindred blood,
The influence of a mother's pray'r !
In vain I spend my unregarded breath !

ISABELLA.

Oh ! I retract the curse which my despair
In its blind rage invok'd upon thy head.
A mother cannot curse her bosom's child
Whom with long travail, and deep pangs she bore.
Heav'n will not hear such sinful pray'rs ; they fall
Heavy with tears back from its glittering vault.
Oh live ! for easier can I bear to look on
The murderer of one son, than mourn for both !

DON CESAR.

Ah ! little weigh'st thou, mother, what thou wishest
To me and to thyself.—My place may be
No more among the living—Couldst thou bear
The murderer's God-detested face, I could not
Endure thy everlasting grief's reproach.

ISABELLA.

Oh! no reproach shall wound thee, no regret
Or loud, or low, shall ever pain thy heart.—
Despair shall soften into melancholy,
And in companionship of sorrow, will we
Lament our misery and blot out thy crimes.

DON CESAR

(*Taking her hand affectionately*).

Thou wilt, my mother!—Yes! at last, despair
Shall weep itself away to resignation!
Then, mother, when one sepulchre incloses
The murderer, and the murder'd—when one stone
Rolls its cold marble o'er our common dust,
Then shall the curse be ended, then shalt thou
Make no distinction more between thy children—
The burning tears those eyes of beauty weep
Shall fall in mingled pity for us both—
Death is a mighty mediator! There
All the wild flames of anger are extinguish'd,
There, hate itself appeas'd—and gentle pity
Bends like a weeping sister's form, with soft,
But firmly strain'd embrace, above the urn.

Let me go hence then, mother ; let me go
The long dark journey, and appease the Fates !

ISABELLA.

All Christendom is rich in shrines of grace
To which the broken and the contrite heart
May turn for comfort : many a heavy burthen
Is in Loretto's holy house laid down ;
And Heav'n's all blessed influence breathes round
The precious grave that did absolve the world.
And powerful are the pray'rs of holy men ;
They have a rich provision of desert ;
And on the spot where murder was, a temple
In solemn expiation may arise.

DON CESAR.

Oh ! thou may'st pluck the arrow from the breast,
But who shall heal the ever open wound ?
Live he, who can, a life of long remorse,
With heavy expiation through all time
Cleansing an everlasting guilt—I cannot
Live on, my mother, with a broken heart.
I must look joyous up amid the gay,
And in the lucid æther, far above
Soar with fresh spirit !—Devilish envy did

Poison my life, while yet thy love was equal—
And think'st thou I will brook the proud advantage
Which thy dear sorrow gives him over me ?
Death hath a pure and expiatory fire
Which in the dark and inaccessible
Alembic of the sepulchre, can change
The dross of vile mortality to the fair
And virgin diamond of perfect virtue,
And blot out every little speck that did
Deform the man while yet he was of earth—
Far as yon planets soar above the world
Above myself victorious will he rise ;
And as fierce envy vex'd us while in life
We did possess equality as brothers,
So now, with restless, never dying fang
'Twill gnaw this heart, now he hath won from me
The mighty stake of immortality :
Now, when resistless like a victor god
The contest over, in triumphant state
He marches through the memory of man !

ISABELLA.

Have I then call'd you back into Messina
That it might prove your tomb ?—I sent for you

To reconcile you, to unite your hearts
In love—but fate hath changed each circumstance
Of hoped for good into substantial ill.

DON CESAR.

Blame not the issue, mother,—Heaven had spoken,
And its stern fiat is fulfill'd. We entered
These doomed portals with the hope of peace,—
And here in peace eternal will we rest,
Conjoined for ever in the house of death !

ISABELLA.

Live, live my son ! Leave not thy mother thus
Bereav'd and friendless in the stranger's land,
A prey to bitter contumely and scorn
Because her children's arms no more defend her !

DON CESAR.

When all the heartless world looks cold upon thee,
Go, seek a refuge at thy children's tomb,
And invoke thy sons' divinity !
For then we shall be gods ! and we will hear thee !
And as Heaven's twins on the wrecked seaman shine
In kindly constellation, we will shield thee
With our near influence, and support thy soul !

ISABELLA.

Nay! live my son! for thy poor mother's sake!

Alas! how can I bear to lose my all!

(*She casts her arms passionately round him.*

Don Cesar loosens himself from her gently, and stretches out his hand to her with his face averted.)

DON CESAR.

Farewell!

ISABELLA.

Alas! too bitterly I feel

How weak a mother's pow'r is o'er her child!

Is there no voice to whose more subtle tones

That stubborn heart may prove accessible?

(*To Beatrice, who appears at the entrance of the scene,*)

Come, daughter, come! Though a dead brother drag
him

With such resistless weight into the tomb,

Still, haply, may his sister and his love

With the sweet witchery of future hope

Allure him back to the blest light of Heav'n!

BEATRICE. ISABELLA. CESAR. CHORUS.

(*Don Cesar hides his face as Beatrice approaches.*)

DON CESAR.

Mother! what hast thou done?

ISABELLA.

Alas! his parent

Hath sued to him in vain! strive thou to move him!

DON CESAR.

Oh! cunning mother! Is it thus thou prov'st me?
Wilt thou again compel me to the lists,
And make the warm sun dear to me once more
On my cold journey to eternal night?
See! the blest spirit of life stands there before me,
Beamy and bright, and redolent of youth,
Scattering immortal roses on my path,
And wreaths of amaranth from his golden horn!
Light soars my heart in the sweet beam of Heav'n,
And, new awaken'd in my wither'd breast,
Hope springs once more, and all the wish to live!

ISABELLA.

Daughter! for thee, or no one will he list,
Beseech him that he break not thus the staff
Which guides thy youth, and which supports my age.

BEATRICE.

There is a victim due to the departed,
And he shall have it, mother!—but 'tis mine
To be that victim!—I was doom'd to death
Ere yet I was in life,—the deep, dark curse
That weighs upon our house demands me! Theft
On righteous Heav'n is the life I live.
I am his murderer! I, it was, who rous'd
Their discord's slumbering furies, and 'tis mine
To appease the manes of the mighty dead!

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN.)

Deep sorrowing mother! Thy sad children, hence,
In jealous medley hurry to the grave;
And leave thee here, deserted and forlorn,
To a cold world all desolate of love!

BEATRICE.

Cast not, my brother, thy dear life away,
Live for our mother's sake! she needs a son!
I am her daughter of a day,—and early
Will she forget what she so late possess'd!

DON CESAR

(*With deeply wounded feeling*).

Alas! my mother! we may live or die
Indifferently, may she but join her lover!

BEATRICE.

Dost thou then envy thy dead brother's dust ?

DON CESAR.

By thy pure woe immortaliz'd he lives !

Once number'd with the dead, I die for ever !

BEATRICE.

My brother !

DON CESAR.

(*With the tone of deepest passion*).

Sister ! dost thou weep for me ?

BEATRICE.

Live for our mother !

DON CESAR.

(*Letting her hand drop, and stepping back*).

For our mother ?

BEATRICE.

Yes !

Live for our mother, and console thy sister !

(*She sinks upon his breast*.)

CHORUS.—(BOHEMUND.)

She is victorious ! all subdued he lies,

Won by a sister's love, a sister's sighs !

Mother of many sorrows ! hope once more !
He dares to live, and thou hast still a son !

(*At this moment a choral hymn is heard.
The folding doors behind are opened, and
the scaffolding is discovered in the chapel
with the bier supported on it, surrounded
by candelabra.*)

DON CESAR

(*Turning towards the bier.*)

No, brother, no ! I will not thus steal from thee
Thy destined victim ! thy still voice comes forth
With holier adjuration from the tomb
Than the spell'd influence of a mother's sighs,
And mightier than the tears of love—I hold
That in my arms would make this mortal life
A portion worthy the eternal gods !

(*Embracing Beatrice.*)

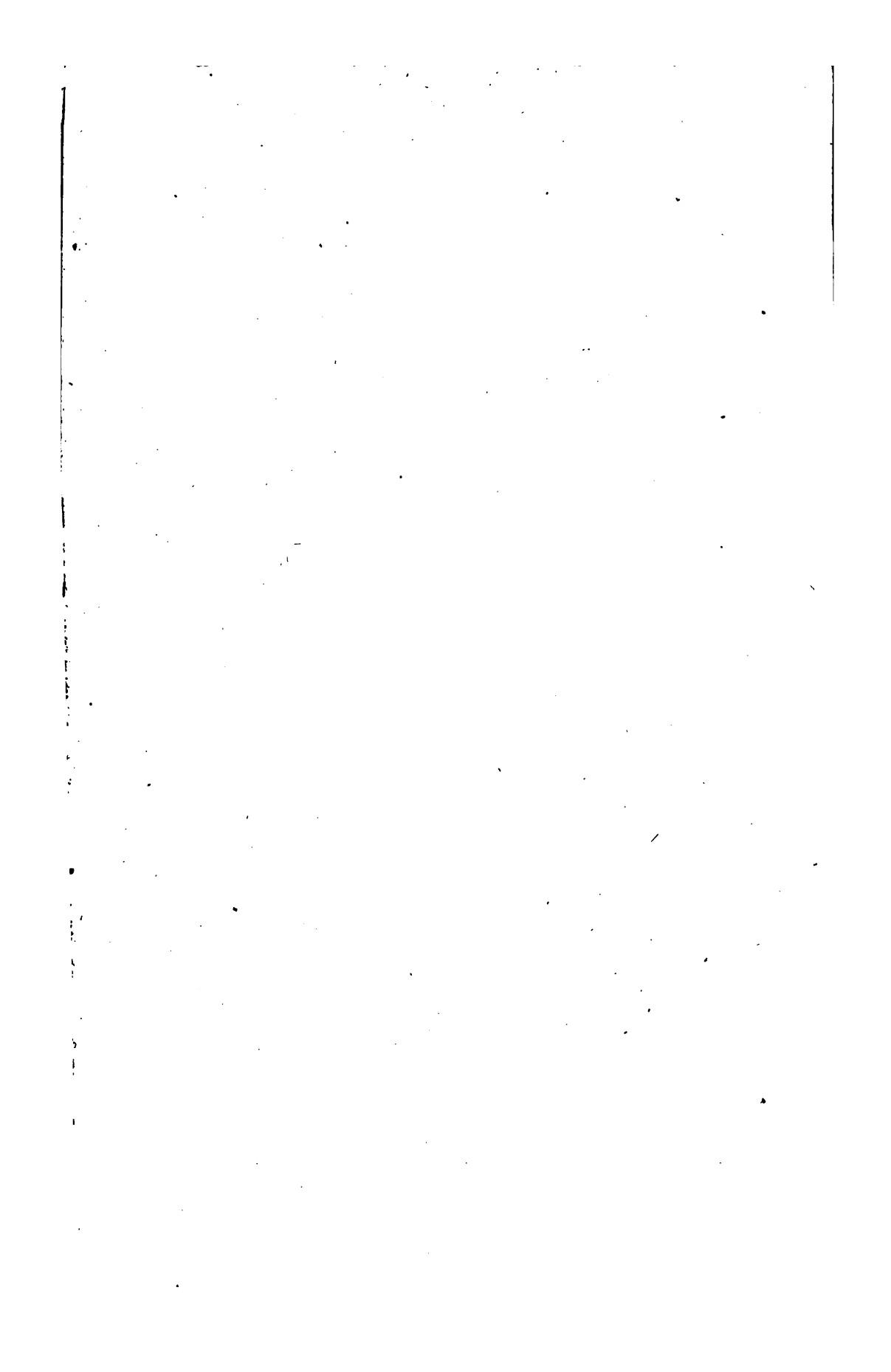
But, shall the murderer revel in wild bliss,
And thy most sainted innocence unreveng'd
Lie low in the cold grave ? Oh ! Thou forbid,
Guide of our days, omniscient and all-good,
That such injustice should disgrace Thy world !

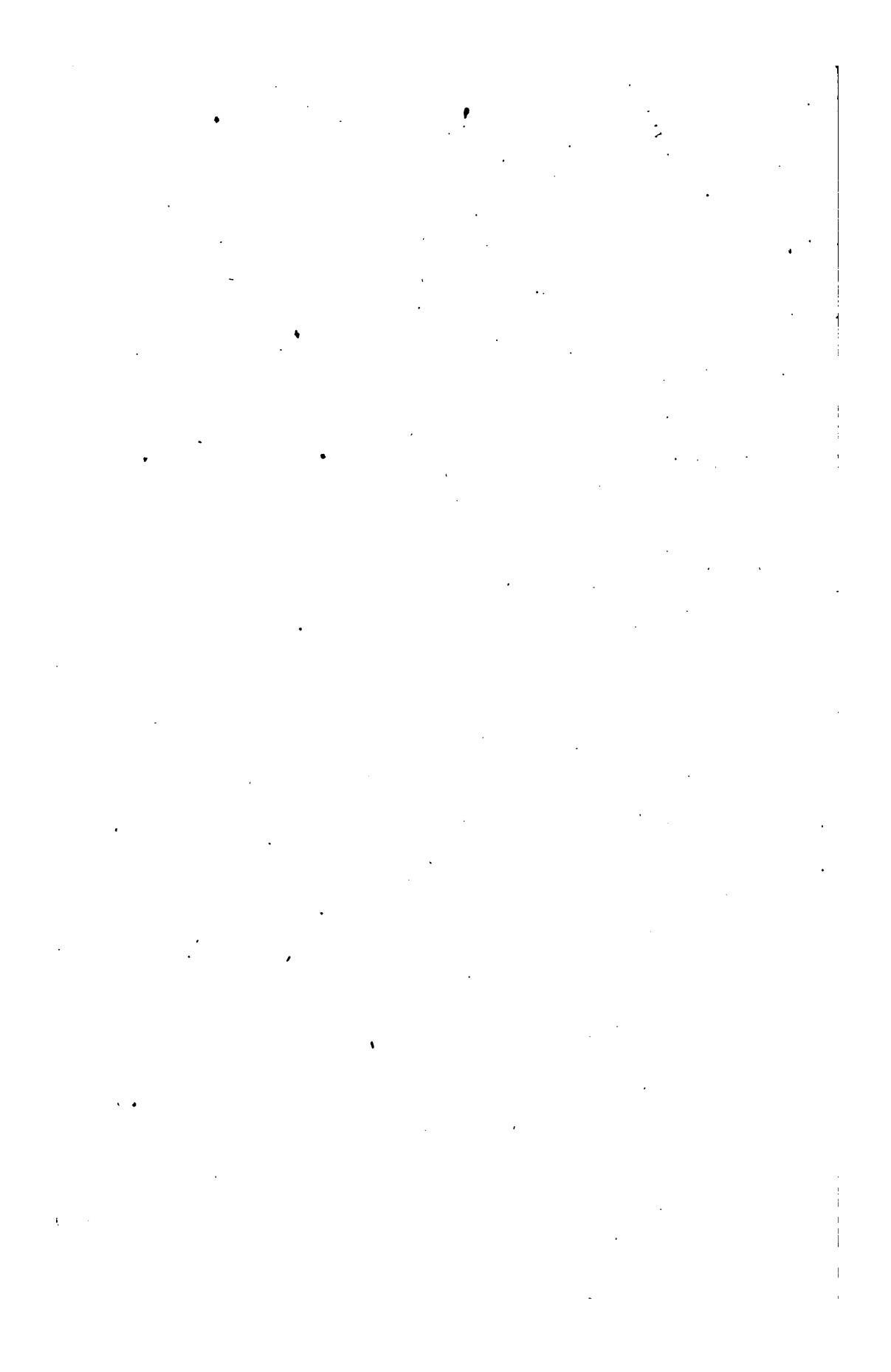
I've seen her tears ! for me, for me she shed them,
My wearied heart's at rest !—I follow thee !

(*He stabs himself, and slides from the arms
of Beatrice to the earth, in the agonies of
death. Beatrice throws herself into her
mother's arms. A pause and deep silence.*)

CHORUS.—(CAJETAN, advancing.)

Deep horror is upon me ! Yet I know not
If I should envy or lament his fate.
But this great truth I feel and comprehend,—
That life, of all our goods, is not the best,
But that the greatest of all ills—is “GUILT.”*







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